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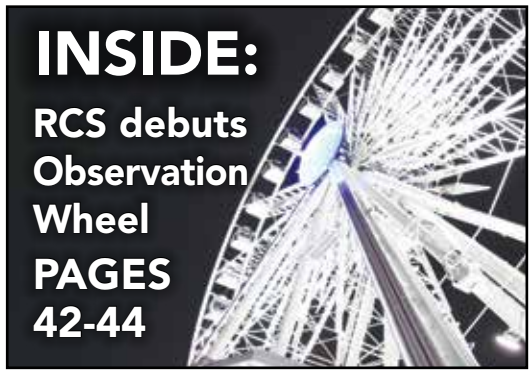

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Great Coasters unleashes two thrilling woodies

InvadR lands at Busch Williamsburg as park's eighth coaster

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — Amid the pomp and circumstance of Viking-themed regalia, InvadR opened to the public at Busch Gardens Williamsburg on April 8. The ride, a Great Coasters, International, Inc. (GCII) designed intermediate-sized twister, was built between the entrance to the New France train station and Le Scoot Log Flume in that section of the property.

The ride is a fit for all family members from kids to teenagers, mom and dad and grandma and grandpa. "It has everything that

Busch Gardens Williamsburg park president David Cromwell welcomes guests to the InvadR opening ceremonies. COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS

everybody wants on this ride," said Clair Hain, Jr., President of GCII. He continued, "There's nothing on here that is dangerous — you don't have to worry about being thrown around or getting hurt. It's very smooth with quick change of directions — a lot of snappiness." Fans agree with Hain that InvadR is a fun, fast, smooth ride providing an out-of-control feeling in a very safe, controlled environment.

Crowdsourcing via social media was the mantra for this ride from the very beginning. InvadR, Viking Raider and Battle Klash were three potential coaster names that were vetted by the park and presented to fans

▸ See INVADR, page 6

A Viking actor portraying Magnus The Red takes a front seat ride on the new InvadR at Busch Gardens. COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS WILLIAMSBURG

Kings Island Introduced its newest wooden roller coaster with the debut of Mystic Timbers on April 13. The Great Coasters product features 16 airtime hills, 197 feet of overall drop and a mystery shed at the ride's end produced by Holovis. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

What's in the Shed? Kings Island's Mystic Timbers debuts

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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MASON, Ohio — Kings Island is no stranger to building world-famous roller coasters. From the captivating Racer when the park opened in 1972 to The Beast — which still holds the record for world's longest wooden coaster — renowned thrillers have been a hallmark of the park for more than four decades.

Officially opening to the public on April 15, Mystic Timbers is the latest crowd-pleaser. Built by Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCII), the coaster is the company's latest project for Cedar Fair, following hits at Valleyfair, Worlds of Fun, California's Great America and, most recently, the revamp of Knott's Berry Farm's GhostRider.

"Cedar Fair has had an incredible partnership with Great Coasters," said Adam House, senior design engineer, GCII. "It makes the designing and building process so streamlined when the customer knows what they want and what they are getting. From the initial project discussion to the point where the corporate guys show up to ride, it just seems so smooth and seamless. "

"I think Mystic Timbers brings the modern-day wooden roller coaster to Kings Island, where The Racer and The Beast were built in the '70s," said Don Helbig, public relations area manager, Kings Island. "GCII brings different technology for our guests."

The thematic slant to the new ride involves "mysterious circumstances" dating back to the 1980s at the Miami River Lumber Company on the edge of Rivertown. Despite the audio and posted warnings to stay out — and certainly: Don't go in to the Shed — guests, of course, insist on forging on in their

▸ See MYSTIC, page 8

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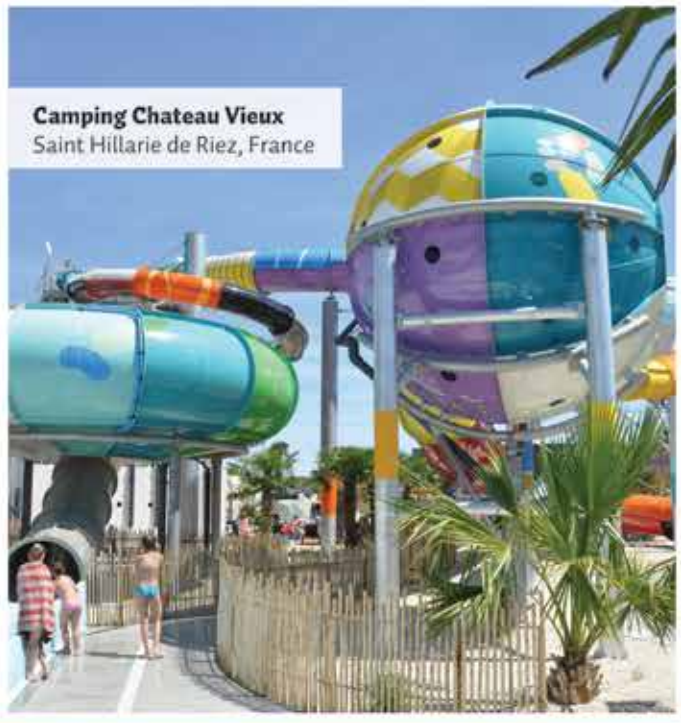

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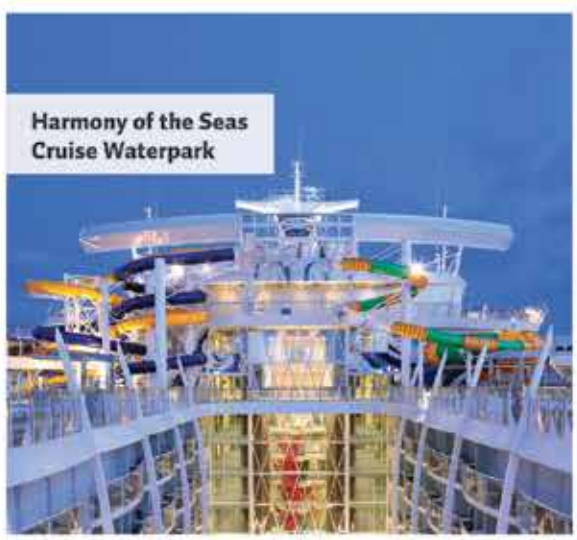

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THE EXPERIENCE

NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: *Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com*

Coasters being designed for family-friendly thrills

Slade

Is the North American roller coaster record-setting arms race over for a while? It would certainly appear so as the selection of new coasters opening across the U.S. this season is far from the record books. A new "family first" approach in thrills is the new trend as engineers and designers plug in smaller designs that still generate the requested thrills, and now slower speeds, the parks are seeking.

New this season are two new wooden thrillers from Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCII), that top out at speeds of only 48 mph on InvadR at Busch Gardens Williamsburg and 53 mph on Mystic Timbers at Kings Island.

California's Great America transformed its B&M stand-up coaster into the more family-friendly Patriot floorless coaster with great fanfare.

Later this spring/summer the U.S. will see:

•Wave Breaker: The Rescue Coaster at SeaWorld San Antonio is from Intamin. It will launch guests with a maximum speed of 44 mph and take riders on a course over the park's signature lake.

•The Gravity Group-designed Mine Blower is a super-compact wooden coaster currently under construction at Fun Spot Kissimmee. It will feature a family-friendly compact layout.

•S&S is supplying 4D Free Spin coasters to three Six Flags parks as well as debuting its GaleForce launch coaster at Playland's Castaway Cove in Ocean City, N.J.

•Lake Compounce turned to Martin & Vleminckx for new trackwork on the historic Wildcat wooden coaster while also outfitting the ride with new trains from GCII.

•Joyland Park in Lubbock, Texas, retired its aging Miler kiddie coaster with a newer Wisdom Dragon coaster, relocated from Santa's Village near Chicago.

The new coaster designs are proving that bigger is not always better and that thrills can indeed come in all sizes.

For a complete list of all the new-for-2017 projects around the globe, be sure to check out *AT*'s annual Amusement Industry Preview, compiled by Jeffrey Seifert, on pages 10 and 12 (North America) and pages 14 and 16 (International).

FLINT'S VIEW: *Bubba Flint*

INDUSTRY OPINION: *Dean Lamanna, dlamanna@amusementtoday.com*

U.S. administration fuels foreign tourism fears

Lamanna

The summer high season is almost here. And with hundreds of millions of dollars in new technologies and attractions being introduced, optimism and expectation in the amusement industry have, indeed, never been higher.

Our business has rebounded from the recession. The American economy, as of this writing, is strong. People are seeking fun and escape more than ever. Nothing to worry about, right?

Not according to travel industry observers, who see signs of what they've dubbed the "Trump Slump" — a foreign tourism fall-off. They say it is the result of Donald J. Trump's tough presidential campaign rhetoric and his administration's push to implement a temporary U.S. travel ban on refugees and immigrants from countries deemed terrorism hot spots.

Beyond any partisan debate, this is a problem of perception.

Travel guru Arthur Frommer sounded the alarm in February, declaring that "most travel experts are of one mind: They are currently drawing attention to the unintended consequences of the Trump-led efforts… pointing to a sharp drop in foreign tourism to our nation that imperils jobs and touristic income."

At the end of January, the travel statisticians at ForwardKeys.com reported an 80 percent plummet in flight passengers from the seven Muslim-majority countries listed in President Trump's original executive order, while *Travel Weekly* pegged the overall drop in incoming foreign visitors at almost seven percent. Forbes.com noted a 12 percent dive in European tourist interest alone.

Any persistence of such numbers for a country that saw an estimated 77.5 million international visitor arrivals in 2015, Frommer said, "would reduce the value of foreign travel within the U.S. by billions of dollars." (Over $7 billion, by one estimate.)

Repercussions on the amusement industry are most likely to be felt in Central Florida and Southern California, where foreign visitors represent a significant theme park and attractions admissions percentage. A much-wider impact, though, may be felt by allied companies and workers.

How our business will fare stateside remains to be seen. But it's not a leap to predict that a viral view of the U.S. as unwelcoming won't be good for some domestic industries — particularly those that depend in part on international tourism, not to mention American cultural appeal and goodwill.

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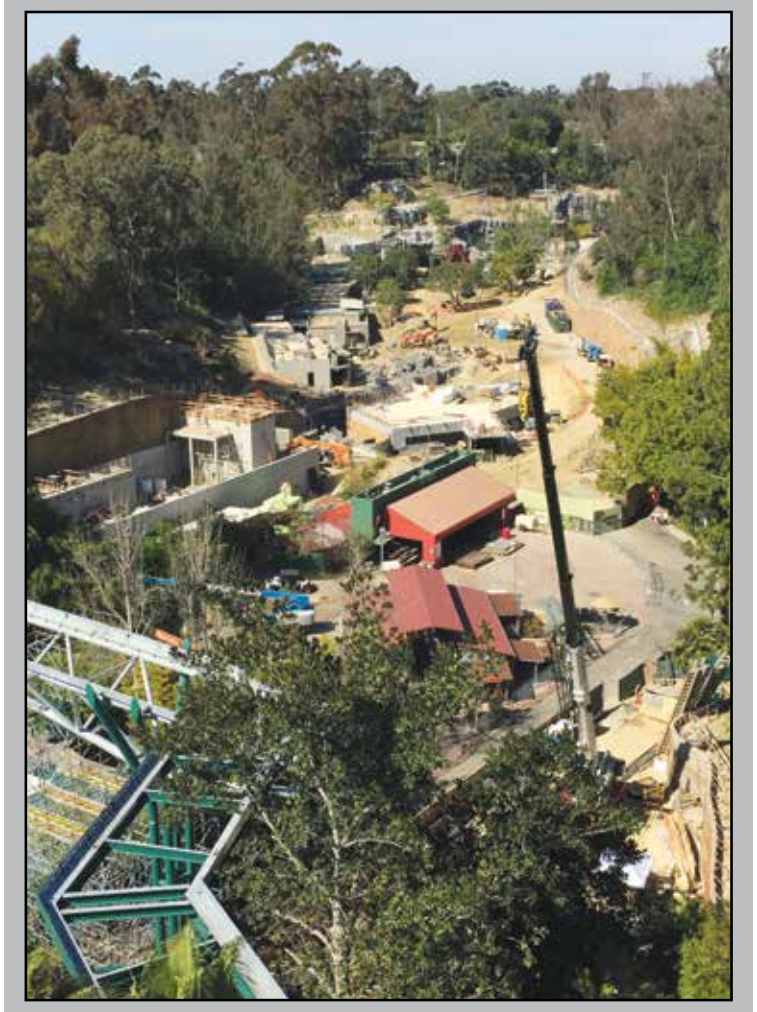
THE INDUSTRY SEEN

A new zootopia in San Diego



Just coming off an event-filled centennial year, the world-renowned San Diego Zoo continues its remarkable momentum as it undertakes the construction of an extensive new animal exhibit. The $68 million, eight-acre Conrad Prebys Africa Rocks will showcase the continent's diverse habitats and inhabitants, including African penguins, baboons, lemurs and honey badgers. Work was progressing apace as shown here in mid-March; the attraction will debut later this year. AT/GARY SLADE

CHARACTER CORNER

Shmoo, Dogpatch USA

Shmoo, the cartoon creature created by Al Capp, was brought to life at Dogpatch USA, a theme park in Marble Falls, Ark., based on the comic strip *Li'l Abner*. The Shmoos first made their appearance in the comic strip on Aug. 31, 1948. Dogpatch USA opened in 1968, but it wasn't until 1980 that a Shmoo became a theme park regular. Although, initially successful, Dogpatch USA never met its attendance projections. In 1977, Al Capp retired and without the Li'l Abner comic strip, the park lost its connection to readers in more than 700 newspapers throughout the country. The park struggled during the 1980s under different owners and through the 1993 season. It closed permanently on Oct. 14, 1993.

CARTOON BY BUBBA FLINT
HISTORY BY JEFFREY SEIFERT

2 MINUTE DRILL

AT: Janice Witherow

Leanna Knoebel Muscato gives opening remarks as Knoebels Amusement Resort opens the 2017 season. COURTESY KNOEBELS

Leanna Knoebel Muscato, Knoebels Amusement Resort

Leanna Knoebel Muscato knows no other life than being in the amusement industry. As a third-generation Knoebel family member helping to operate the charming **Knoebels Amusement Resort** in Pennsylvania, Leanna was born into the business and has a genuine passion and pride in her work. She was recently named the first-ever female president of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association — a role to which she is bringing a lifetime of experience and diving into with great enthusiasm. Leanna's work ethic, approachable demeanor and fun-loving spirit shine through on every occasion!

Title: Vice President of HH Knoebel Sons and Games Director.

Number of years in the industry: My entire life. I started at 6 years old in the fishpond game.

Best thing about the industry: It offers fun, relaxation and enjoyment for many people. And lots of memories are made in this industry.

Favorite amusement ride: I love wooden coasters, but a good carousel is always on my radar.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be: Reading a good book on a sunny beach.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: Offering an affordable family outing while making safety and excitement a priority.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is: The warmer weather, and the challenge a new season brings each year.

Favorite Superhero:
Clark Kent ... the real Superman.

Summer is almost here. I am most looking forward to: Meeting new guests, and yet I love escaping to my giant warehouse.

Besides, Knoebels, where is the one place you would take a visitor to Pennsylvania?
Gettysburg. I love history.

When I eat Mexican food, I typically order:
Tacos.

The song I know all the lyrics to is: "Palisades Park," but I sing "Knoebels Groves Park"

The longest I have ever waited in line for anything is: Three hours for Cars Land in Disneyland.

The coolest television commercial out right now is: All of the Capital One commercials with Charles Barkley during NCAA playoffs. The Melissa McCarthy commercials for Kia are also great.

Choose one: steak or lobster
Steak. Lobster is too much work!

The last time I ate pizza was: Three weeks ago… Cesari's at Knoebels isn't open yet.

If I had an extra day in the week, I'd spend it: Reading or putting a jigsaw puzzle together.

Your house is on fire. The three things you grab first are: Joe, my two kitties and my computer/Ipad. I guess that is more than three!

When I say White House, you say: The family homestead. That is what we call our main office.

Growing up, my favorite cartoon was:
"Road Runner." "Beep-Beep."

On Memorial Day, you will find me: Carrying the Knoebels flag in our family parade, and most likely singing during my annual speech at 3 p.m.

The first thing I do when I get to work is:
Make sure my coffee cup is full and set out to gather yesterday's data.

Coolest place to look at the stars: If I am home, in my back yard. But if I'm working, my upper warehouse.

You are at the mall. Where do we find you?
Not sure! I really don't shop much.

My go-to summertime drink is: Water, but a gin and tonic when not at work.

MAILBAG

The following comments were sent to *AT* editor Gary Slade in response to the newspaper's 20th anniversary issue, published last month:

"Congratulations on 20 years of publishing an amazing magazine — what an incredible amount of work and accomplishment. It continues to be an honor and a pleasure to work with you and the *AT* team. Thanks for all you have brought to our industry. Well done and thanks for mentioning Sherrie Brammall!"

—Terri Adams, Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resorts

•

"Thank you for 20 years of great industry news!"

—Brad Thomas and the Silver Dollar City family

•

"On behalf of Knoebels Amusement Resort, I would like to congratulate *Amusement Today* on this milestone. For 20 years, *AT* has helped link our family-owned-and-operated park in rural Pennsylvania with the international amusement industry. Educating us on other parks' successes and challenges, and connecting us with suppliers and manufacturers have been just two of the ways *AT* has helped us immerse ourselves in the industry. The Golden Ticket Awards have helped us build upon and take pride in our strengths, and set goals for the awards that we have yet to win (but are determined to). I would also like to add that *AT* is a special publication to the entire team at Knoebels, as it's the most looked-forward-to industry mailing. I, personally, wish to congratulate Gary, as I recall conversations at my bar with him, Barbara and myself when things weren't so rosy."

—Dick Knoebel, Knoebels Amusement Resort

•

"Congratulations on your 20th year; it's hard to believe that much time has passed! Great-looking new format for the magazine."

—Rick Bastrup, R&R Creative Amusement Designs, Inc.

•

"Big-time congratulations on your 20th anniversary to you and your staff! Quite an accomplishment. All of us in the amusement industry are thankful for your dedication and excellence in providing a very professional publication that has been beneficial in so many ways. Keep up the great work and looking forward to seeing you soon somewhere down the road. Way to go, Gary."

—Ken Kobane, Apex Parks Group

•

"Just a quick note of congratulations on your 20-year anniversary. I know it has been a labor of love and at times frustrating. Also, the coated stock on the April issue is sharp and I hope it generates more ad revenue with those who shied away from the traditional newsprint."

—Gina Guglielmi, Intermark Ride Group

•

"Just reading my morning Extra! Extra! and wanted to drop you a quick note. Congrats on the 20th anniversary of *Amusement Today*! That's something you should be really proud of, as I'm sure it hasn't always been easy."

—Brian Witherow, Cedar Fair Entertainment Company

•

"Congratulations on 20 great years of *Amusement Today*! Quite the milestone. What a great service you have provided for our industry keeping us informed and up to speed on happenings throughout each leisure sector. Your contributions have been greatly appreciated. Here's to 20 more!"

—Dennis Speigel, International Theme Park Services, Inc.

•

"Just seeing in your Extra! Extra! edition today that you are celebrating your 20th anniversary. Congratulations to you and the *AT* team from all your friends at AIMS! That is a major milestone, especially these days in the publishing business. We are all very proud of your accomplishments which are many and also cherish the close important relationship between AIMS and *AT*. As I have said on many occasions, people don't realize how impactful your focus on safety is to our industry. Your efforts to publicize the dedicated efforts of AIMS and others results in a safer industry. Thank you for that and we all look forward to toasting your 20th when we are next together."

—Jim Seay, Premier Rides and AIMS board member

•

"I just wanted to reach out and say congratulations on 20 years of *Amusement Today*. When I moved on from the sports industry, I questioned whether I could find another career where there was so much passion for the industry. I have found that and more in the amusement park world and the work you do at *Amusement Today* is a shining example of that passion. Simply a great read every issue. Here's to the next 20 and I hope our paths cross again soon in the future."

—Roger Ross, California's Great America

•

"Congratulations on 20 years and all the best in the future!"

—Bill Alter, W. A. Alter Inc.

•

"I just learned in your most recent issue that you are celebrating 20 years of *Amusement Today*, to which I would like to congratulate you sincerely. Since the beginning, *AT* has always been a must-read for me and my team and I still enjoy going through each edition in detail as soon as it arrives here. You are covering the diversity of the sector in great detail and have been a true companion to our wonderful industry.

I would like to take the opportunity and thank you for accompanying Europa-Park and Mack Rides, and I really hope to welcome you soon again here in Rust to show you our latest additions, including our amazing flying theater Voletarium. I wish you all the best for the upcoming 20 years and beyond!"

—Roland Mack, Europa-Park GmbH & Co. & Mack Rides

•

"When Gary Slade and his team stepped to the plate 20 years ago to provide us with comprehensive reporting on events and important issues related to our industry, it was certainly timely.

Amusement Today (AT) immediately filled a void left by the loss of longtime publication *Amusement Business*, considered by many to be the "have to have" print copy of what was going on in the world of amusement parks, carnivals, manufacturers and suppliers. Fortunately, Gary knew the ropes of the newspaper industry to help him launch *Amusement Today* at a time others might not have gambled on such a venture.

It's been a pleasure to watch *AT* grow over the years and spread its wings to incorporate news on numerous fronts important to many us. Personally, *AT* keeps me abreast of the latest happenings in the amusement park business and connected with the carnival industry, where I got my start more than 40 years ago.

Congratulations, Gary, on this milestone and for making *Amusement Today* my "have to have" publication!

—Ron Gustafson, Quassy Amusement Park

Ride Entertainment Group issues statement concerning incident in Paris

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Ride Entertainment Group, owners of the Skycoaster brand, issued a statement concerning a ride mishap on an attraction at the Throne Fair in Paris, France, that resembles of the company's products.

The company stated:

"Yesterday (April 10) there was a shocking incident in Paris (France) on the 'Adrenaline' Extreme Ride, which is an unauthorized knockoff device which attempted to copy Skycoaster's signature flight experience. In the incident a young girl's harness apparently failed, leaving her hanging by her ankles as she rode the 50-meter-tall ride. Thankfully, despite the dangerous situation, it appears that there were no serious injuries.

"The Adrenaline ride is not connected in any way to Skycoaster or Ride Entertainment. Skycoaster and Ride Entertainment have worked tirelessly to achieve its unmatched safety record, including rigid equipment inspections and mandatory operator training."

If the amusement industry has further questions please contact Mark Rosenzweig at info@rideentertainment.com.

• rideentertainment.com

Icon chosen as name of new Mack coaster at Blackpool Pleasure Beach

BLACKPOOL, England — On April 11, Blackpool Pleasure Beach announced the name of its new £16.25 million rollercoaster as Icon.

Speaking on the name unveil, Blackpool Pleasure Beach Managing Director Amanda Thompson, OBE, said: "Icon is going to be one of the most talked-about, iconic rollercoasters of the future. The name speaks for itself as it will be one of the most iconic rides on the planet. This is Blackpool Pleasure Beach's biggest investment to date and will have a real impact on the town and region as a whole."

Icon is being manufactured by Mack Rides at their factory in Waldkirch, Germany. It will open in spring 2018.

• blackpoolpleasurebeach.com

EPR Properties wraps 12-park purchase; Premier gains 40-year operating lease

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — EPR Properties, a specialty real estate investment trust (REIT), announced on April 6 that it has finalized the purchase of 12 theme and water parks under an agreement that also retains Premier Parks, LLC, as operator and awards 40-year operating leases for each park.

"Premier Parks has an even brighter future under this new agreement with EPR Properties, as it gives us new resources to grow and improve our theme and water parks," said Premier Parks CEO and President Kieran Burke. "The new 40-year operating leases awarded in conjunction with this purchase give our parks much greater stability and investment in the years to come. Our parkgoers won't see any changes in the day-to-day operations of the park. It is business as usual as we enter an exciting 2017 season!"

The operating lease agreements impact 12 of the water and theme parks currently managed by Premier Parks including Frontier City and White Water Bay in Oklahoma City; Darien Lake near Buffalo, New York; Wet 'n' Wild parks in Hawaii, Palm Springs, Phoenix and Houston; Rapids in West Palm Beach; Wild Waves in Seattle; Magic Springs in Hot Springs; Waterworld California in Concord, CA; and Myrtle Waves in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

EPR Properties (NYSE:EPR) is a New York Stock Exchange publicly traded REIT with substantial resources, over $5 billion in investments, and a proven track record in the entertainment industry with assets in golf entertainment venues, megaplex theaters and ski resorts.

"Premier Parks has been successfully operating most of these theme and water parks for many years," continued Burke. "In anticipation of the EPR purchase, we were able to bring four new parks under the Premier Parks management umbrella last fall, including the theme and/or water parks in Seattle, Concord, Myrtle Beach and Hot Springs. We are confident the new ownership will have a positive impact on each of our parks' customers, staff and community."

INVADR

Continued from page 1

for a vote. Over 12,000 people participated. Dan Dipiazzo, VP of marketing for Busch Gardens explains this approach, "We have a loyal group of fans who really want to be involved in everything. We thought, let's involve them. Let's not keep this a secret like we normally do. Let's get out there as soon as we can and be very transparent. From the beginning when we announced that we were going to build a wooden coaster (at Pass Member Preview Day in 2016), we didn't even know the name for it yet, so help us find the name. They came up with a great one with InvadR. Then we went from there. We had them involved in some of our marketing campaigns."

Fans were kept up to date on the construction progress throughout the process. Holes were cut in the construction site barrier walls so visitors could view the progress. "We weren't hiding anything. We wanted them to be along for the ride, so to speak," said Dipiazzo. This even included a fan hard hat tour, selecting the ride logo and construction wall art. Most recently there was a contest where fans could submit to be the faces of InvadR. "They selected six people who are our Viking personas that we're using in video and marketing. From the beginning (of the Decide the Ride campaign) all the way through the fan celebration today, they have been along the whole way."

Dipiazzo feels the GCII roller coaster fills a vital niche for their property: "We're very excited to have InvadR as part of our portfolio. One of the things we try to do is recognize that we don't always have the most roller coasters, but we want to have the best, well-rounded selection. I think InvadR really fills that niche by bringing us a wooden coaster and also a great family ride that can be that first big coaster for kids."

Due to the tight ride area GCII had to work with, InvadR really layed itself out. "Engineers used 3-D modeling to fit the coaster into the beautiful canvas that's our park," said David Cromwell, president Busch Gardens Williamsburg and Water Country USA.

During the Opening Ceremony, complete with numerous Viking invaders surrounding the ride entrance area featuring a battering ram structure, Cromwell touted the virtues of the new coaster: "It will deliver in all its aspects. It is fun, it is fast, it is thrilling. A wood coaster really fills the gap of an attraction mix. We're also excited because it appeals to a broad audience. It's a family thrill ride." Cromwell's speech was interrupted by a group of Viking actors led by Magnus The Red who proclaimed: "It is a day for the brave! A day for the bold! It is a day for the Vikings!" Magnus urged his followers, some draped in war paint, capes, weapons and shields, to be among the first to ride InvadR. The invading group included members of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula; Fenvald Vikings living history group of Virginia Beach; and select fans who voted online in choosing the name and other ride elements.

While InvadR is completely new, parts were used from the now defunct Gwazi from Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. Hain explained: "Mainly the mechanical stuff. They used some of the parts from the trains, the lap bar release mechanisms, the brakes." A spare chain, a few sprockets and a couple of the shafts from the Florida park were also repurposed in Virginia. "Everything was completely revamped. It was completely rebuilt down to the nuts and bolts," said Hain.

The InvadR ride site was not without challenges. "There was no place to build structure," said Hain. "Our office was set up a mile from here. We built everything there and carried it in with a fork lift and set it in place. Foundations were going in the same time as we were building the ride. The lift hill and drop hill we built out in the parking lot in two one-half sections. We had to block the road, then we had to get a huge crane to fly everything over the top of these buildings, over the railroad tracks and everything else. There were extra expenses none of us were really anticipating. Everything was blocked in because of the fencing from the park with the train operating at the same time. There was a lot of stop (and) starts. However, it came out great. They are very happy, I am very happy. It's always great to have a new family [coaster] under my belt."

Hain's favorite seat? "Always the back seat." Which side? "Right, I don't know why."

Suzy Cheely, director of design and engineering for the Virginia properties was asked about working with Great Coasters International. "They are a great company, with a lot of great engineers. They're very passionate about their work and their coasters. I think it was a wonderful partnership. I think the results show," Cheely said.

Also in attendance at the opening day festivities was Hayden Hain, 15 year-old son of Clair. He travels in the summer and other times when school is not in session with his father. When asked about his future aspirations, the younger Hain said, "I'm trying to go to college to be an engineer for my dad. So hopefully I can take it over (someday)."

FAST FACTS

Name/Park
InvadR/Busch Gardens
Williamsburg, Va.

Type
Intermediate size
wooden hybrid coaster
with steel superstructure

Height/Speed/Length
74 feet/48 mph/2,118 feet

Trains/Capacity
2 16-passenger,
repurposed Gwazi
trains/700pph

Special Features
Nine airtime hills; two
tunnels; Saddle Helix;
crosses railroad tracks
four times and
intertwines with
LeScoot flume ride

Footprint
300 feet by 520 feet

Height Requirement
46 inches

Suppliers
Great Coasters Intl., Inc,
Sunbury, Pa.
•
Skyline Attractions and
Ashland Technologies
Orlando, Fla.
•
Weber Group
Sellersburg, Ind.

Opened
April 7, 2017

Top, Vikings and local villagers take a ride on the new InvadR. The intermediate-sized wooden coaster reaches a top speed of 48 mph. Above left, GCII's Clair Hain and son Hayden try out the test seat that is located to the right of InvadR's entrance. Above right, InvadR's entry portal was created by Indiana-based Weber Group, Inc. The Viking-themed battering ram took eight weeks to build, stands 20 feet tall and took 650 man-hours to construct.
COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS; AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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MYSTIC

Continued from page 1

quest for adventure. What awaits is a wild and thrilling coaster ride in pickup themed trains. Raving approval was a strong early indication that Mystic Timbers is a hit.

The aforementioned shed is the ride's finale and the focus of the marketing tagline: #WhatsInTheShed. While no real spoilers will be found here, it is fair to say that it is themed video-based content. The provider was Holovis. Because the content is programmable, Kings Island currently has three distinct endings during the day, and another three at night.

Greg Scheid, regional vice president for Cedar Fair, said, "When we originally had started talking about the ride, we wanted to put a little kick at the end that would make it unique. The campaign of 'What's in the Shed?' kept everyone guessing and was a great marketing ploy to keep interest level high. But we knew once everyone rode the ride, the ride [itself] was going to be the meat of the ride. Or you could look at it as the ride is the whipped cream and the ending is the cherry on top."

Above, riders on Mystic Timbers enjoy the 3,265-foot-long ride; right, the ride's 54-degree first drop is on a curving angle, while below right, riders zip through the course at 53 mph in their train, themed as a pickup truck. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND; AT/JOHN ROBINSON

"We're always looking for something more and more for our guests, so we knew we could build a great coaster with GCII, but we wanted to do something extra. Just when you think it is over, it's not over," said Rob Decker, senior vice president of planning and design, Cedar Fair. "We worked with Holovis, and they came up with some really compelling ideas toward the supernatural and the unexplained. You go back into the woods that you haven't gone before. And it all focuses on the shed. We knew that when the riders go into the transfer and storage area before going back into the station there would be a pause, and that was an opportunity to capture the riders' imagination once again."

"Just the overall pacing of the ride is awe-inspiring," said House. "The only section of the ride that you can see from inside the park is the lift and first drop. The remainder of the ride is so low and tight that it flies through the entire course. What's also great about Mystic Timbers is that it feels like a completely different ride in the front seat compared to the back seat. I think there is still a toss-up right now of which people prefer, but they are so completely different that it warrants a ride in both."

Regarding construction, House commented, "Even though we have had a fairly mild winter, weather was still a threat through the construction of Mystic Timbers. I think we had 24 days of rain in January, so you can imagine that there were some hurdles there, especially with concrete installation. Additionally, the crossing of the lagoon, train, and White Water Canyon ride all created some challenges for the layout. We had to have the station and shed high enough to get over the train, we needed custom designed piles for the lagoon crossing, and I can't even tell you how many bridges are throughout the ride to be sure we stayed above [the rapids ride]. What's great about all of these obstacles is that Mystic Timbers will integrate seamlessly into the entire Rivertown area of King's Island."

AT asked Kings Island General Manager Mike Koontz about the decision of the location of the new coaster. He said: "The whole process started a couple of years ago. We knew we wanted to do a coaster, which evolved into a wooden coaster. That fits the theming of the Rivertown area, and then we pulled in the story about Miami River Lumber Company. From our experience with The Beast and going back into the woods, it made this kind of a natural. But with The Beast, you have to go back to it to see it. We wanted to make sure the guests could see the ride from the midway. The Beast and Mystic Timbers are two totally different experiences."

See more on VIDEO TRACK at AmusementToday.com

The out-of-control nature of the ride also features 16 moments of negative Gs momentarily lifting people from the seats, as well as a curved tunnel at the back of the ride. By running three trains, the park is hoping for a ridership of 1,200 people per hour. Because of the show component, all three trains can be stacked if necessary. Audio up the lift prompts the chain to slow in two places so riders can hear the panicked warnings as they ascend the incline. This also helps with the proper placement of trains in the show element sequence.

"Skyline Attractions supplied the centerline for us," said House. "We tried a few new elements on Mystic Timbers. We are excited for the double camelback trick track which is two back-to-back bunny hops that switch directions up and over each element. There is also a quadruple S-turn going back into the midcourse tunnel that will catch everyone off guard."

"I love the first drop in the back seat," said Helbig. "Plus, when you do that back turnaround at night and start the stretch toward the shed, you see the Eiffel Tower all lit up. I think it is going to be a difficult decision at night now. Where most people always head to The Beast, people are now going to have a tough time to decide. I think in time this ride has a chance to become the ride they want to start their day with and end their day with."

FAST FACTS

Name/Park
Mystic Timbers
Kings Island, Mason, Ohio

Type/Opened
Wooden coaster/
April 13, 2017

Height/Speed/Length/ Height Restriction
109 feet/53 mph/
3,265 feet/48 inches

Trains/Capacity
3, 24-passenger trains/1,200 pph

Special Features
16 airtime hills; 197 feet of overall length of first drop; 54 degree angle of first drop; mid-course tunnel, and themed Mystery Shed

Wooden Track Note
Mystic Timbers gives KI a combined total of 18,804 feet of wooden track, the most at any park in the world

Suppliers
Great Coasters Intl., Inc, Sunbury, Pa.
•
Skyline Attractions and Ashland Technologies, Orlando, Fla.
•
Irvine Ondrey Engineering, Ann Arbor, Mich.
•
Holovis
Midlands, U.K.

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CANADA

Alberta

Galaxyland, Edmonton...Zero Gravity — Chance Rides Unicoaster

British Columbia

Playland, Vancouver...Bug Whirled — SBF Visa compact spinning coaster; Moser Rides 10-meter tower ride; Flutterbye — Zamperla Magic Bikes

Ontario

Canada's Wonderland, Vaughan...Soaring Timbers — Mondial Inferno; Muskego Plunge — SplashTacular body slides including DrenalinDrop capsule
Santa's Village, Bracebridge…SBF/Visa Triple spiral spinning coaster
Wild Water Kingdom, Brampton…Reopening of closed water park; two ProSlide RideHouse waterplay structures

Québec

Camping Atlantide, Saint-Calixte…Polin Space Hole and Wave Slide
Bora Parc, Valcartier…New indoor water park (December 2016) with ADG/WhiteWater attractions including body slides with AquaDrop capsules.
La Ronde, Montreal…Titan — Zamperla Giant Discovery
Pays des Merveille, Sainte-Adèle…E&F Miler family coaster relocated from Fort Jefferson Fun Park

MEXICO

Morelos

Six Flags Oaxtepec, Oaxtepec… Re-opened park; ProSlide three new attractions

UNITED STATES

Alabama

Owa, Foley…New park, Rollin' Thunder — Zamperla Thunderbolt coaster; Zamperla gravity coaster; Zamperla Twister coaster; 21 Zamperla rides
Spring Valley Beach, Blountsville…ProSlide Twister x3

Arizona

Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix, Glendale…WhiteWater West AquaPlay

California

California's Great America, Santa Clara…Patriot — conversion of B&M standup coaster to floorless coaster
Disney California Adventure, Anaheim…Guardians of the Galaxy — Mission: Breakout — remake of former Tower of Terror elevator ride
Emerald Glen Aquatic Facility, Dublin…New facility with indoor and outdoor pools; WhiteWater West Champagne Bowl, AquaDrop, SpeedSlide, AquaPlay, 3 body slides
Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park…Sol Spin — Mondial Top Scan
Knott's Soak City, Buena Park…Shore Break — Whitewater West Colorado Drop and Flatline Loop; The Wedge — WhiteWater 6-person open-flume raft ride
Legoland California, Carlsbad…Surfer's Bay — WhiteWater West 6-lane mat racer; sprayground; Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens miniland addition
Pacific Park, Santa Monica…Shark Frenzy — custom-designed Larson Tilt-A-Whirl
Santa Ana Zoo, Santa Ana…50 Monkeys Ferris wheel — Chance Wheel with custom-thatched roof gondolas
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz…New main entrance; Shockwave — Zamperla Mega Disk'O; Typhoon — ARM double-arm swing ride; Fright Walk — haunted walk through under the boardwalk
SeaWorld San Diego, San Diego…Ocean Explorer — new themed area with Submarine Quest — Chance Rides electric vehicle submarine simulation; plus five new themed flat rides
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Vallejo…Wonder Woman Lasso of Truth — Zamperla Giant Discovery
Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia…Justice League: Battle for Metropolis — SallyCorp, Alterface, Oceaneering dark ride
Wild Water Adventure, Clovis…WhiteWater West speed slide

Colorado

Banana's Fun Park, Grand Junction…Coconut Cove — WhiteWater West AquaPlay, AquaSpray, & Spray Features
Elitch Gardens, Denver…Star Flyer; Mega Wedgie — WhiteWater West Body Slide, Freefall Plus, Speed Slide
Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, Glenwood Springs…The Haunted Mine Drop — Drop Ride designed by Stan Checketts
Great Wolf Lodge Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs…New water park with ADG/WhiteWater attractions (opened Dec 2016)

Connecticut

Lake Compounce, Bristol…Martin & Vleminckx retracking on Boulder Dash and Wildcat roller coaster; New GCII trains on Wildcat; Ghost Hunt upgrade of shooters, targeting and scoring system from Lagotronics
Quassy Amusement Park, Middlebury…SBF/Visa mini Pirate Ship

Florida

Daytona Lagoon, Daytona Beach…Enhanced indoor Lazer Tag arena, interactive ropes course
Disney's Animal Kingdom, Orlando…Pandora - World of Avatar — new themed land with Avatar Flight of Passage 3-D flight simulator; Na'vi River Journey — indoor boat ride
Disney's Typhoon Lagoon, Orlando…ProSlide Power River
Fun Spot America, Kissimmee…Mine Blower — Gravity Group wooden coaster
Gaylord Palms Resort, Orlando…ADG Flowrider double and waterslides
Gulfstream Park, Hallandale…Chance Rides 36' custom carousel
Legoland Florida, Winter Haven…New Ninjago World themed area with Ninjago The Ride — TrioTech interactive dark ride, Beach Retreat resort accomodations
Old Town, Kissimmee…Fabbri wheel
Sun Splash, Cape Coral…Pirate's Cove — interactive water play structure
Universal Studios Florida, Orlando…Race Through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon — 3-D flying theater
Universal's Volcano Bay, Orlando…New water park with 18 ProSlide attractions including RocketBlast water coaster

Georgia

Rigby's Water World, Warner Robins…New water park for existing FEC; WhiteWater West AquaPlay, AquaSpray, Mini Body Slide, Wave River, Boomerango, champagne bowl, Aquatube
Six Flags Over Georgia, Austel…Justice League: Battle for Metropolis — SallyCorp, Alterface, Oceaneering dark ride
Wild Adventures, Valdosta…Ohana Bay — ProSlide Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister, Kidz Twister, Twister x2

Hawaii

Wailea Beach Resort - Marriott, Kihei…WhiteWater West body slides

Illinois

Deep River Waterpark, Merrillville…Kraken — ProSlide 6-lane KrakenRacer
Fox Valley, Aurora…Chance Rides C.P. Huntington train
Santa's Village AZoosment Park, Dundee…Super Cyclone — Interpark Cyclon coaster
Six Flags Great America, Gurnee…Joker — S&S 4-D coaster

Indiana

Holiday World, Santa Claus…The Raven and The Legend — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains; Firecracker — refurbished Calypso

Kansas

Parrot Cove, Garden City…New water park with ADG/WhiteWater attractions (opened Dec 2016)

Kentucky

Kentucky Kingdom, Louisville…Thunder Run — New PTCI coaster train; Eye of the Storm - Larson Giant Loop

Maryland

Six Flags America, Upper Marlboro…Wonder Woman Lasso of Truth — FunTime Star Flyer; Roar and Wildcat — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains
Splash Mountain Waterpark, Ocean City…WhiteWater West AquaPlay

Massachusetts

Ecotarium, Worcester…Chance Rides C.P. Huntington train
Edaville USA, Carver…Kersplash — E&F Miler water coaster relocated from Washington State Fair
Six Flags New England, Agawam…Joker — S&S 4-D coaster
Southwick Zoo, Mendon…Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride

Missouri

Bigfoot on the Strip, Branson…New Bigfoot-themed entertainment center with a Bigfoot Action Tower — Soaring Eagle 200-foot drop tower; Bigfoot Adventure Golf, Bigfoot Adventure Maze, Bigfoot Discovery Expedition; interactive cineman, arcade
Six Flags St. Louis, Eureka…Spinsanity — Zamperla Mega Disk'O
Worlds of Fun, Kansas City…Mustang Runner — Huss Troika; Falcon's Flight — Huss Condor

New Jersey

Casino Pier, Seaside Heights…Hydrus — Gerstlauer custom Euro-Fighter 320
Clementon Lake Park, Clementon…HellCat — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains
Morey's Piers, Wildwood…Great Nor'Easter — Complete retracking of SLC coaster with new Vekoma track
Playland's Castaway Cove, Ocean City…GaleForce — S&S multi-element steel coaster; Wild Waves — E&F Miler steel coaster; Chance Rides C.P. Huntington train
Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson…Justice League: Battle for Metropolis — SallyCorp, Alterface, Oceaneering dark ride

New York

Adventureland, East Farmingdale…IRG/Gosetto two-level dark ride
Peek'n Peak Resort, Clymer…Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride
Seabreeze, Rochester…Time Machine — Technical Park Super Miami
Six Flags Great Escape, Queensbury…Bonzai Pipelines — ProSlide Twister x2
The Castle Fun Center, Chester…Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride

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North Carolina

Carowinds, Charlotte…Do-Si-Do — Huss Troika; Electro-Spin — Mondial Top Scan; Rock'N'Roller — Mack Musik Express; Zephyr — Zierer Wave Swinger

City Lake Park, High Point…Chance Rides C.P. Huntington train

H2OBX, Powells Point…New water park with ADG Adventure Lagoon, Twin Tides; WhiteWater Boomerango, Flatline Loop, AquaDrop, 3-line Multi-lane kids, Mini Body Slide

North Carolina Museum of Life and Science, Durham…Chance Rides C.P. Huntington train

Ohio

Cedar Point, Sandusky…Cedar Point Shores — rebranded park (former Soak City); WhiteWater West Mini Body Slide, Flatline Loop and Colorado Drop Slide; Blue Streak — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains

Kalahari Sandusky, Sandusky…ProSlide TornadoWave 45,FlyingSaucer 30, Tornado 24/ Tornado 24 (Hybrid), Twister, TurboTwister with SkyBox

Kings Island, Kings Mills…Mystic Timbers — GCII wooden coaster

Oklahoma

Frontier City, Oklahoma City…Wildcat — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains; Gully Washer — ProSlide Twister slides x3

Pennsylvania

Dorney Park, Allentown…Thunderhawk — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains; Kaleidoscope — Huss Troika

Dutch Wonderland, Lancaster…Merlin's Mayhem — S&S suspended coaster

Hersheypark, Hershey…S&S Worldwide Triple Tower Complex

Kalahari Poconos, Pocono Summit…ProSlide Tornado 60, Mammoth, Pipeline with Explosion, CannonBowl, FreeFall, TurboTwister with SkyBox, Pipeline, Pipeline,4-lane OctopusRacer, Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister, ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister

Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg…Over the Top — SBF Visa Wave Rider

Waldameer Park, Erie…Battle of Lake Erie - custom-themed ProSlide Ridehouse 500; The Vault - Funovation lazer maze challenge

Rhode Island

Roger Williams Zoo, Providence…Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride

Tennessee

Dollywood, Pigeon Forge…Whistle Punk Chaser — Zamperla family coaster; Drop Line — Funtime drop tower; Tailspin Racer — WhiteWater West 6-lane Whizzard

Nashville Shores Waterpark, Hermitage…Barefootin' Bay — WhiteWater West AquaPlay

The Island, Pigeon Forge…SBF Visa Wave Rider

Wilderness at the Smokies, Sevierville…WhiteWater West Aquaplay, ramp slide, mini multi-lane, mini body slide; Cataloochie Creek adventure golf

Texas

Epic Waters, Grand Prairie…New indoor water park; WhiteWater West FlowRider Double, AquaPlays, Fusion Boomerango + Constrictor, Freefall, Waves, Whizzard, AquaSphere, AquaLoop, AquaTube

Joyland, Lubbock…Wisdom Rides family Dragon Coaster

Kemah Boardwalk, Kemah…Hypnospin — Larson Tilt-A-Whirl; Boardwalk Bullet — PTCI overhaul of coaster trains

Morgan's Wonderland, San Antonio…New ultra-accessible water park with multiple attractions from WhiteWater West

Royal Splash Texas, Plainview…New water park with multiple slides from Advanced Coatings; relocated slides from Splash Amarillo

SeaWorld San Antonio, San Antonio…Wave Breaker: The Rescue Coaster — Intamin LSM-launched coaster

Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio…Thunder Rapids Water Coaster — ProSlide Rocket Blast/Fying Saucer; Celebrate — reimagined and enlarged night spectacular

Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington…Joker — S&S 4-D coaster

Splashway Water Park, Sheridan…ProSlide TornadoWave 60, Mammoth, TornadoWave 60, RideHouse 100, CannonBowl 30, TurboTwister with SkyBox, TurboTwister with SkyBox, Pipeline, 4-lane OctopusRacer, Kidz Twister x2, Kidz MiniRiver x2

Trader's Village, Grand Prairie**…**Village Vortex — Larson Loop; Chance Rides Wipeout and YoYo

Typhoon Texas, Pflugerville…Rebranded park (former Hawaiian Falls); WhiteWater West AquaPlay

Wet 'n' Wild Splashtown, Spring…Alien Chaser — ProSlide FlyingSaucer 30

Wet 'n' Wild WaterWorld, Anthony…WhiteWater West 4-person open-flume raft ride

Wonderland Park, Amarillo...Refurbished Huss Air Boat flat ride

ZDT's Amusement Park, Seguin…ThunderVolt Speedway Go Karts — Amusement Products electric go karts with turbo boost

Virginia

Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Williamsburg…InvadR — GCII wooden coaster

Wisconsin

Action City Trampoline Park, Eau Claire…Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride

TRAVELING SHOWS

All Around Amusements…Kolmax bumper cars, Kolmax Tea Cups; Owen Trailers Infernal Combustion

Amusements of America…Kolmax Tea Cups

Arnold Amusements…Downdraft Zero Gravity

Bates Brothers…Journey to Mars — VR augmentation to ARM drop tower

Blue Sky Amusements…Widsom Rides Polar Express

Crescent City Amusements…KMG Rock It

D.C. Lynch Shows…Luna-Park Ferris wheel

Frasier Shows…Luna-Park carousel

Funtime Shows…Kolmax Flying Elephants

Great American Midway Entertainment…Jung Max Rides Choo Choo Train

Jack Jeffrey…Luna-Park Ferris wheel

James Gang Amusements…Luna-Park Ferris wheel

Lisko Family Midway Amusements…Luna-Park Ferris wheel

Mac's Carnival and Attractions…Flachs Rides Ferris wheel

Newton Shows…Luna-Park carousel

PBJ Happee Day Shows…Battech Ent Cliff Hanger; Ital International/Technical Park Ferris wheel

Playland Amusements…Kolmax bumper cars

Powers Great American Midways…Kolmax bumper cars, Kolmax Tea Cups

Pride Amusements…Owen Trailers Haunted House

Ray Cammack Shows...Ronald Bussink La Grande XL (R50XL) Observation Wheel; Zamperla Endeavor; Gold Star Manufacturing Puppy roll, Bob's Space Racers 2 Water Race games; Waterloo Tent & Tarp new game tents (800 custom pieces in total) and Waymatic new ticket booths

River City Amusements…Kolmax Tea Cups

River City Carnival…Flachs Rides Ferris wheel

Schmidt Amusements…Luna-Park carousel

Skelley's Amusements…S&S Frog Hopper

Skinner Amusements…Battech Ent. Black Widow

Talley Amusements…Beast — KMG Afterburner

Windy City Amusements…Kolmax bumper cars, Flachs Rides Ferris wheel; SBF/ Visa Drop n' Twist

Wood Entertainment…Sky Eye Wheel — Lamberink RL45 portable observation wheel

Main Street Amusements…SBF Visa 360

CRUISE SHIPS

Carnival Glory…WhiteWater West AquaSpray (Geyser Jets, Solid Stream Jets), AquaPlay, PoolSider, AquaTube

Pacific Dawn…Polin Aquatube x2

Dawn Princess…Polin Aquatube x2

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Compiled by Jeffrey Seifert

Albania

City Park Tirana Water Park, Tirana…Polin Wide Slide, Multi Slide, Freefall, Kamikaze, Body Slide, Blackhole, Aquatower, multiple kid's slides
Rostom Park, Tiaret…Galaxy-style coaster relocated from Parc d' attraction Sétif's Land
Zina Beach, Mostaganem…Polin Space Hole, 2x Aquatube, Multislide, Tunnel Freefall, Compact Slide, Body Slide, Aquatube, Sprayactions, mutiple kid's slides

Australia

Aussie World, Sunshine Coast…Crazy Mouse — Zamperla Twister coaster
BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort, Arlie Beach…New water park with muliple slides from TQ Aquatics
Splash, Craigieburn…Polin Tunnel Body Slide, Blackhole
Warner Bros. Movie World, Gold Coast…Mack Rides multi-element coaster

Austria

Familypark, Burgenland…Gockeljagd — motorcycle ride; Waldexpress — train ride
Prater, Vienna…Höllenblitz — Stein indoor, launched coaster with spinning cars (through August 2017)

Bangladesh

Blueland Water Park, Dhaka…Polin Rocket Freefall+Kamikaze+Freefall, Kamikaze+Freefall, Wide Slide, Aquatube, Space Boat, Black Hole+Turbolance

Belgium

Bellewaerde, Leper…Dawson Duel — double Wiegand Alpine Coaster completely automated (no rider-controlled braking)
Comics Station Antwerp, Antwerp…New FEC/indoor theme park with over 60 attractions
Plopsaland De Panne, Adinkerke-De Panne…Heide the Ride — GCII wooden coaster

Bulgaria

Aqualand, Plovdiv…Polin King Cobra

China

Alpine Coaster Wuyuezhai, Wuyuezhai National Park...—Wiegand Alpine Coaster
Atlantis Snaya, Hainan Island…ProSlide SuperLoop with SkyBox, SuperLoop with SkyBox, OctopusRacer, FreeFall, Tornado 18, Tornado 24/ Tornado 24, BehemothBowl 40/ Tornado 60, Tornado 24/ TornadoWave 60, RocketBlast, RideHouse 600, 4-lane Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister x2, Kidz Bowl 14
Bai Se Bai Dong Waterpark, Guangzhou…ProSlide 8-lane KrakenRacer, SuperLoop with SkyBox, MultiBump, FreeFall,
Bali Water World, Fushun…Indoor and outdoor water park expansion with Wiegand Maezler tube slides, raft slides, body slides, wave machine, kids play area
Evergrande Ocean Flower, Sanya…ProSlide TornadoWave 60, Mammoth, SuperLoop with SkyBox, 6-lane OctopusRacer, RocketBlast, FreeFall with SkyBox, Tornado 24/ Tornado 24/ Tornado 24, BehemothBowl 40/ BehemothBowl 40, Pipeline x2, Tornado 18, CannonBowl 40
Fantawild, Nanning...Vekoma Boomerang coaster; Martin & Vleminckx/Gravity Group wooden coaster
Guangxi Water Park, Guangxi…Polin Family Rafting Slide, Surf Safari
Happy Valley Chongqing, Chongqing…S&S Power Space Shot and Turbo Drop
Hong Kong Disneyland, Honk Kong...Iron Man Experience — 3-D motion simulator
Husyi Brothers Movie World, Suzhou…S&S Power Combo Tower
Maya Water Park, Chongqing…New water park; ProSlide Tornado 60,BehemothBowl 60, Kidz Twister x 3, 2-lane Kidz ProRacer x2, Kidz MiniRiver x2, Twister
Oriental Heritage, Xiamen...Galaxy Express — Vekoma Family Suspended coaster; Jungle Trailblazer — Martin & Vleminckx/Gravity Group wooden coaster
Playa Maya Waterpark, Shenzen…WhiteWater West Master Blaster
Sun Tzu Cultural Park, Shandong…Catapult — S&S Air-Launch coaster; Mine Car — Golden Horse mine train coaster; S&S Power Space Shot and Turbo Drop
Sweetland Egg Water Park, Dalian…ProSlide HydroMagnetic Rocket, Tornado 18, CannonBOWL 40, Octopus-KrakenRacer
Weihai Rio Carnival, Weihai…S&S Power Space Shot and Turbo Drop

Columbia

Piscalago, Girardot…ProSlide TornadoWave 60

Croatia

Aquacolors Porec, Porec…Polin 6-lane Windigo
Mimovec Fun Park, Biograd na Moru…New park with mulitple rides and two coasters, Alien 8 — Beijing Jiuhua Amusement Rides spinning mouse; Space Witch — unknown manufacturer

Denmark

Djurs Sommerland, Nimtofte…DrageKongen — Intamin inverted coaster
Fårup Sommerland, Saltum…Hvirvelvinden — Zamperla Discovery relocated from Liseberg
Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen…Orangeriet — greenhouse/concert venue

Egypt

Festival Ceasar Palace, Cairo…Polin Rafting Slide, 2 x Compact Slide, Multislide, Kamikaze, 2x Twister, Freefall, Space Hole, Tsunami, multiple kid's slides
Interplaza Mall Egypt, Sharm El Shiekh…Polin Body Slide, Kamikaze, Multislide, Space Hole, Tsunami,Windigo, Black Hole, Turbolance, Looping Rocket, Aquatower, Sprayactions

England

Alton Towers, Alton…CBeebies Land — new themed area with rides and hotel; Go Jetters Vroomster Zoom Ride
Chessington World of Adventures, Chessington…Grüffelo-Ride — redesign of former Bubbleworks ride
Drayton Manor, Drayton Bassett…James and the Red Balloon — Zamperla balloon ride
Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach, Great Yarmouth…Reverse Time — SBF Visa Reverse Time
Gulliver's Warrington, Warrington…Polin Aquatube, Tipping Bucket, Sprayactions
Legoland Windsor, Windsor…Ninjago the Ride — Triotech interactive dark ride
Southport Pleasureland, Southport…Speed Loop — Pinfari Zyklon ZL42 coaster relocated from Kongeparken

Finland

Särkänniemi Amusement Park, Finland…Hype — Premier Rides Sky Rocket II

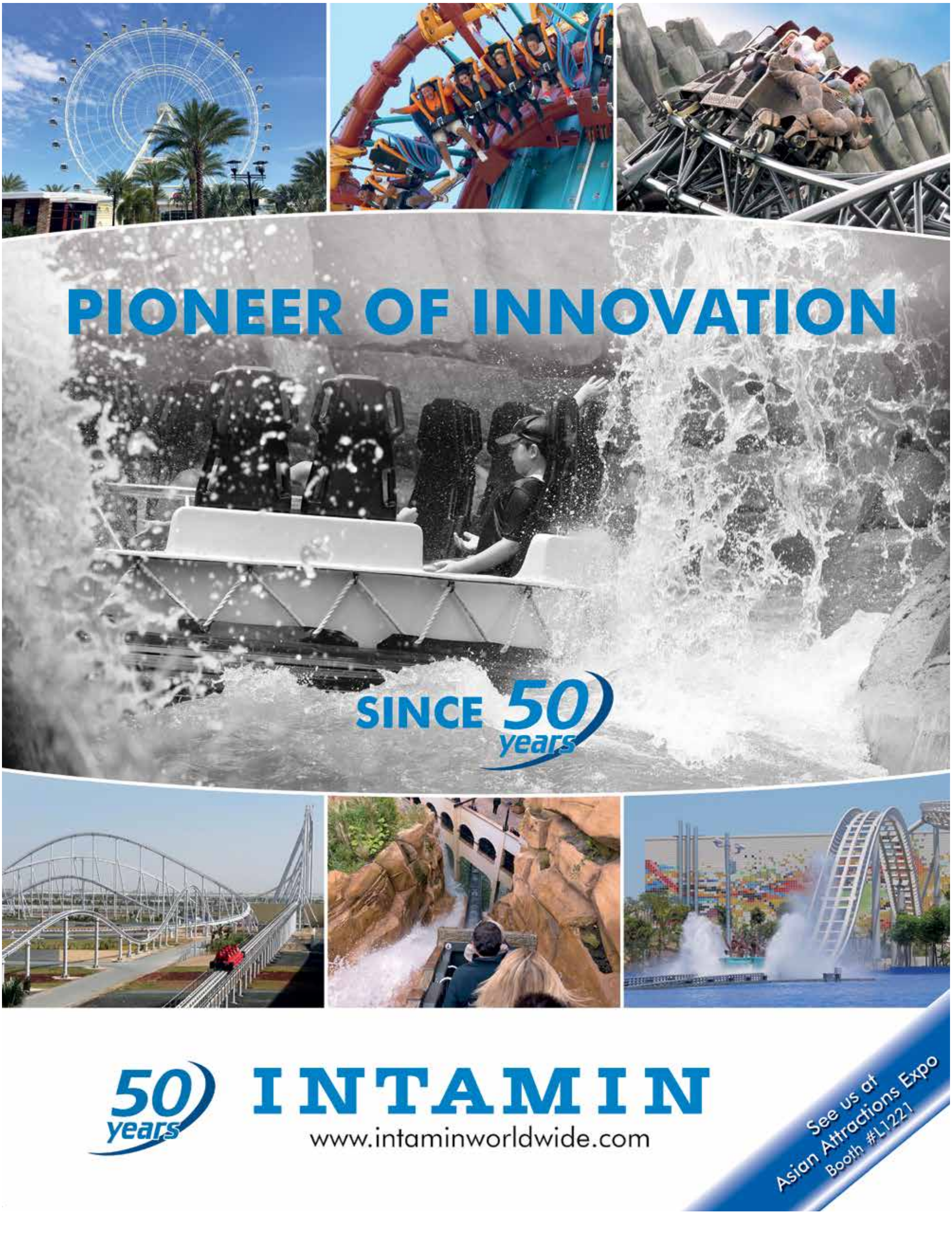
France

Atlantic Park, Seignosse…Polin Turbolance, Flying Boat, Black Hole + Rafting Slide
Disneyland Paris, Marne la Vallée…Star Wars Hyperspace Mountain — redesign of Space Mountain indoor coaster; redesigned Star Tours simulator; 25th anniversary parade
Festyland, Bretteville-Sur-Odon…Miolnyr — Zamperla Air Race
Fraispertuis, Jeanménil…Golden Driller — Intamin drop tower with varying passenger vehicles
Futuroscope, Jaunay-Clan…L'Extraordinaire Voyage — Dynamic Attractions flying theater (opened December 2016)
Parc Astérix, Plailly…Pégase Express — Gerstlauer launched coaster
Parc Bagatelle, Merlimont…Silver Wings — Zamperla Air Race
Parc du Bocasse, Bocasse…Le Splash-O-Saure — Soquet flume ride
Parc du Petit Prince, Ungersheim…Serpent — Zierer Force Two
Puy du Fou, Les Epesses…Le Grand Carillon — new musical spectacle featuring 53-foot bell tower; La Citadelle — medieval-themed hotel

Germany

Bayern Park, Reisbach…Pirateninsal (Pirate Island) — children's water sprayground
Chrupfalzpark, Loifling…Freefall Tower; Flying Dragon; Schauckelschiff Fantasy Train; Kids Top Spin
Eifelpark, Gondorf…Käpt'n Jack's Wilde Maus — Maurer Rides Wild Mouse relocated from Holiday Park
Erlebnispark Schloss Thurn, Heroldsbach…SBF-Visa Freefall Tower
Erlebnispark Steinau, Steinau an der Straße…Erlis Wackelstein — Zierer Kontiki; Schubkarrenrennen — Metalworking Kirschner Wheelbarrow Race
Erlebnispark Tripsdrill, Cleebron…Höhenflug — Gerstaluer Sky Fly
Europa Park, Rust…Voletarium — Brogent Technologies Flying Theater with audio video by Kraftwerk
Ferienzentrum Schloss Dankern, Haren…Eine Reise durch das Mittelalter — abc Rides roller coaster
Fort Fun Abenteuerland, Wasserfall…New Funkid train for Speed Snake roller coaster
Freizeitpark Geiselwind, Geiselwind…Multiple new children's rides; Extrem — propeller ride; Tower of Fear — drop ride
Freizeitpark Plohn, Lengenfeld…Drachenwirbel — SBF Visa compact spinning coaster
Freizeitpark Ruhpolding, Ruhpolding…Wasserhüpfer and Wasserwirbel — raft slides
Hansa Park, Sierksdorf…Kleine Zar — Preston & Barbieri mini coaster; Gerstlauer Sky Fly
Heide Park, Soltau…Ghostbusters 5D — Triotech interactive dark ride with ride system from Zierer
Holiday Park, Hassloch…Wasserski Rondell — Zierer Jet Ski
Legoland Deutschland, Günzburg…Ninjago the Ride — Triotech interactive dark ride

▸ **INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW CONTINUED ON PAGE 16**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Movie Park Germany, Bottrop…Star Trek: Operation Enterprise — Mack Rides launch coaster
Skyline Park, Bad Wörishofen…Sky Dragster — Maurer Rides spike coaster; Kids Spin — SBF Visa compact spinning coaster

Greece

Amada Colossos Resort, Rhodes…Polin Body Slide, Rafting Slide+Blackhole, Freefall, Space Hole, Multislide
Grecotel Olympia Riviera, Kuyllini…Polin Multisurf, Flying Boats+Blackhole Combo, Rafting Slide, Looping Rocket, Wave Slide, Space Hole, Aquatower, Sprayactions

India

Amaazia Water Park, Surat…New water park (December 2016) with Polin looping rocket with launch capsule, Black Hole, Black Hole/Tubolance, Uphill Navigatour/Black Hole, Space Boat, Twiester Racer/Windigo. Freefall/Body Slide combo, water play structure, wave pool, lazy river, rain dance floor

Iraq

Bagdadland, Baghdad…Polin King Cobra, Black Hole+Uphill Navigatour, Racer Slide+Space Boat Bowl, Turbolance, Surf Safari, Looping Rocket, Space Hole Bowl, 4x Windigo, Aquatube+Body Slide, Black Hole+Flying Boats, Rafting Slide+Flying Boats, 2x Kamikaze, Freefall, multiple kid's products

Ireland

Tayto-Park, Ashbourne…Viking Village — new themed area with Viking Voyage — Interlink flume ride

Italy

Etnaland, Belpasso…ProSlide 4-lane Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister, RideHouse 300

Japan

Fuji-Q Highland, Fujiyoshida…Dodonpa — ride enhancements from S&S Worldwide
Kijima Kogen, Beppu…Jupiter — PTCI refurbishment of coaster trains
Legoland Japan, Nagoya...New theme park; Dragon Coaster — Zierer Force-Five; Dragon's Apprentice — Zamperla gravity coaster; multiple attractions including Merlin's Flying Machines — Zamperla Magic Bikes; submarine attraction; observation tower; splash battle
Nagashima Spa Land, Nagashima…S&S Power 4-D Free Spin coaster

Kazakhstan

Climket Hotel, Shymkent…Polin Freefall, Aquatube, Space Hole, Body Slide, Black Hole, Multi Slide, Aquatower, multiple children's slides

Kosovo

Ujevara Waterpark, Ferizaj…Polin Multislide, Black Hole, Body Slide, Space Hole, Kamikaze, Aquatube, Rafting Slide, Wave Slide, Splash Touch, Aquatower, multiple kid's slides

Malaysia

Big Adventure Waterpark, Desaru…ProSlide Tornado 60, Tornado 24/ Tornado 24/ Tornado 24 (Hybrid), Tornado 18, CannonBowl 30, KIDZ Twister, 2-lane Kidz ProRacer, 4-lane Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Bowl 14, Kidz Tornado 12, RideHouse 500
Borneo Samariang Resort City, Kuching…Proslide Mammoth, SuperLoop with SkyBox, 6-lane ProRacer, Pipeline,Twister, CannonBowl 30, RideHouse 200, Kidz Twister x2, Kidz MiniRiver, KIDZ ProRacer, Kidz Bowl 14
Langkawi Water Fantasy, Kuala Lumpur…Polin Surf Safari, Multi-Slide, Body Slide, Aquatube, Flying Boats+Black Hole, Navigatour+Black Hole, Turbolance, Family Rafting Slide, Wide Slide, Aquatower
Movie Animation Park Studios, Perak…Casper Birthday Blast — Sally interactive dark ride; Asteroid Attack — SBF Visa spinning coaster; Mr. Peabody & Sherman's Time Adventure — indoor coaster; Intamin 10-inversion coaster

Netherlands

Attractiepark Duinen Zath, Appelscha…Roller Coaster — Pinfari Zyklon Z47 from traveling showman
Attractiepark Slagharen, Slagharen…Gold Rush — Gerstlauer Infinity coaster
Efteling, Kaatsheuvel…Symbolica: Palace of Fantasy — ETF dark ride
Walibi Holland, Biddinghuizen…Der Rapids Ride — new boats from Vekoma

Poland

Energylandia, Zator…Speed — Intamin Water Coaster; Boomerang — Vekoma Family Boomerang coaster; Dragon Coaster — SBF Visa M600D powered train;
Slaskie Wesołe Miasteczko, Chorzów…Lech Coaster — Vekoma multi-element coaster

Russia

Aquaworld Water Park, Novosibirsk...New water park (October 2016); WhiteWater West Manta, AquaCouse, AquaLoop, AquaSphere, Constrictor, Space Bowl, body and tube slides.
Grozny Waterpark, Grozny…Polin Windigo (3 lanes), Aquatube, Looping Rocket, Black Hole, Magic Hole, Aquatower and multiple kids slides
Lermonovo, Krasnodar…Polin Windigo (4 Lanes), Looping Rocket, Body Slide, Blackhole + Flying Boats + Rafting + Slide + Black Hole Combination, Space Boat, Sphere, Blackhole + Flying Boat + Black Hole + Turbolance, kids'pirte ship and other kids attractions
Wonder Island/Divo Ostrov, Saint Petersburg…Intamin 10-inversion coaster

South Korea

Hampyeong Water Park, Hampyeong…Polin wide slide and compact slide
Lotte World, Sokcho…ProSlide RocketBlast, ProBowl, Twister, RideHouse100
Park Habio, Seoul…ProSlide CannonBowl 30, Twister, Pipeline
Shinwha World Jeju, Jeju…ProSlide Double TornadoWave 60, FlyingSaucer30, RocketBlast, Tornado 32/ Tornado 32, Pipeline x3

Spain

Ferrari Land, Salou…Red Force — Intamin LSM-launch coaster
PortAventura, Salou…S&S Power Combo Tower

Sweden

Furuvik, Gävle…Fireball — Vekoma family boomerang coaster
Gröna Lund, Stockholm…Ikaros — Intamin Skyfall drop tower
Liseberg, Gothenburg…Loke — Intamin Gyro Swing
Vikingaliv - Life of Vikings, Stockholm…Ragnfrid's Saga — ETF Ride Systems/ P&P Projects dark ride

Taiwan

E-Da World, Kaohsiung...Wiegand 38-meter dry slide

Thailand

Siam Park City, Bangkok…ProSlide 4-lane Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Twister, RideHouse 300

Trinidad and Tobago

Five Islands Waterpark, Chuguarmas…New water park; ProSlide RideHouse 250, Kidz MiniRiver, 2-lane Kidz ProRacer, Kidz Tornado 12, Kidz Bowl 14, Kidz Twister

Turkey

Ankapark, Ankara…New park with 16 coasters and multiple rides — delayed from 2016
Granada Luxury Belek Resort Waterpark, Antalya…Polin Kamikaze, Twister, Flying Boats+Black Hole+Navigatour+Black Hole, Rafting Slide, Black Hole, Space Hole, Body Slide, Freefall, Rafting Slide, Jungle-themed AquaTower
Royal Seginus Resort Water Park, Antalya…Polin King Cobra, Body Slide, Kamikaze, Freefall, Multislide, Rafting Slide, Sphere, Flying Boats

UAE

Al Montazah, Sharjah…Polin Wide Slide, Freefall, Aquatube, Body Slide, Space Hole, Mini Turbolance, Kids Wideslide, Kids Aquatube, kid's slides
Atlantis the Palm, Dubai…ProSlide Kidz ProRacer, Kidz Bowl 14, Twister, Kidz MiniRiver, Kidz Pipeline
Ferrari World, Abu Dhabi…Turbo Track — Intamin LIM-launch coaster
Motiongate Dubai, Dubai…New park (December 2016); Capital Bullet Rain — Mack Rides launch coaster; Dragon Gliders — Mack Rides powered suspended dark-ride/coaster-style system; Green Hornet — Gerstlauer bobsled coaster; Hot Pursuit — Gerstlauer Infinity coaster; Smurf Village Express — Gerstlauser family coaster; Shrek's Fairy Tale Journey — interactive dark ride; Panem Aerial Tour — 3-D motion simulator; King Fu Panda: Unstoppable Awesomeness — 3-D motion simulator

Ukraine

Cherkasy Waterpark, Cherkasy…Polin Aquatube, Aquatube, Space Hole + Tunnel Body Slide
Respublika, Kiev…Vekoma junior coaster; Maurer Rides spinning coaster

Vietnam

Alpine Coaster Halongbay, Halong City...Wiegand double Alpine Coaster
Asia Park, Da Nang...Highway Boat — Premier Rides suspended coaster relocated from Hard Rock Park; Paradise Fall — Premier Rides Ferris wheel lift coaster relocated from Hard Rock Park
Dragon Park, Ha Long...New park; Dragon's Run — B&M roller coaster relocated from Hard Rock Park; Little Dragon's Flight — Vekoma Suspended Family Coaster; Mysterious Journey — Vekoma junior coaster
Typhoon Cove Waterpark, Ha Long Bay…ProSlide Tornado 60, BehemothBowl 60, TornadoWave 60, Tornado 24/ Tornado 24/ Tornado 24 (Hybrid), RideHouse 600

Wales

Oakwood Theme Park, Nartberth…Flight of the Peach — Pinfari RC40 coaster relocated from M&Ds Scotland
Zip World, Betws-y-Coed…Pforest Coaster — Wiegand Alpine Coaster

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INTERNATIONAL

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‘Hype’ is building for new launch coaster at Särkänniemi

AT: *Andrew Mellor*
amellor@amusementtoday.com

Hype will be a standout attraction at Finland’s Särkänniemi theme park. COURTESY SÄRKÄNNIEMI THEME PARK

TAMPERE, Finland — The “hype” is building at Finnish park Särkänniemi as the venue’s latest attraction, a spectacular new roller coaster, is completed for the 2017 season.

Designed and manufactured by Premier Rides, the ride is the first high-tech, triple-launched coaster experience in the Nordic region. Hype is a multilaunch coaster that is based on the award-winning Superman Ultimate Flight located at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo, California. It has the most current launch system technology available in the industry and with the exception of the coaster train itself, there are virtually no moving parts on the ride, making it extremely reliable and maintenance friendly.

Riders are first launched out of the station up to a height of 15 meters (49 feet). Gravity then pulls them rapidly back into the station where they are launched backward up to a height of 30 meters (98.5 feet). Again gravity takes control and brings the train through the station once more where the final launch is energized and riders shoot up a vertical twisting track to the highest point on the ride where a tantalizing slow roll places guests upside down approximately 45 meters (147 feet) in the air — a record for the Nordic region. After executing the roll, guests enter a face-first vertical drop, ending in a twisting loop where they experience exciting Gs. The riders then drop toward ground level where the train once more speeds through the station and then is smoothly braked using magnetic technology as it comes to a stop in the station.

Hype is the first new roller coaster at Särkänniemi in nearly a decade and is the largest investment in the park’s history.

“A professionally themed Hype Square, an urban, modern and vividly colorful area, will be built around the ride,” the park stated. “This area will host a new two-story restaurant with a lakeside terrace and souvenir shop, along with many other Hype-themed elements. The marketing campaign for Hype will feature a famous Finnish pop-singer, whose identity will be revealed later in the spring.

“Hype is the first triple-launch roller coaster in the Nordic countries and also the highest launch coaster in Finland. It accelerates to a maximum speed of 100 kmh and launches passengers vertically to 45 meters (147 feet) above the ground. At its highest point the track makes an inversion and drops passengers straight down into a vertical loop before returning to the station.”

Miika Seppälä, managing director of Särkänniemi, commented: “We selected Premier Rides because we wanted to make a major statement and to create a signature experience at Särkänniemi Theme Park that will be appreciated by our loyal guests. Hype is just that. The collaboration with Premier Rides has allowed us to produce something that will be truly iconic for the park.”

Särkänniemi’s summer season began on April 29 and Hype will be operational in mid-June.

The new Hype coaster is the largest single investment in the history of Särkänniemi and the park’s first new coaster in almost a decade. Hype has been designed and manufactured by Premier Rides. COURTESY SÄRKÄNNIEMI THEME PARK

Disneyland Paris celebrates 25th anniversary in style

AT: *Andrew Mellor*
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PARIS, France — Disneyland Paris marks its 25th anniversary this year and to celebrate the milestone the resort has some special attractions and entertainment available to guests visiting in 2017.

Star Tours: The Adventures Continue has a number of surprises in store, including new experiences, new destinations, new characters, a new pilot to take passengers on their journey and more. The attraction returns in 2017 with an all-new, action-packed, epic intergalactic voyage, all set in 3D.

Star Tours: The Adventures Continue gives guests the opportunity to explore the galaxy far, far away through a selection of new journeys in 3D that feature the arrival of a multitude of new scenes. With more than 70 different mission combinations from the *Star Wars* saga, Star Tours invites guests to enjoy an experience that is unique on every flight.

After Star Tours: The Adventures Continue, which was launched in March, the next eagerly anticipated event was the opening of Star Wars Hyperspace Mountain. From spring, Star Wars took over the legendary space attraction to provide a new adventure in which guests can join, in a brand new ambiance, the famous Rebel Alliance and a sensational ride with total immersion in the Star Wars universe, utilizing music from the *Star Wars* saga, amazing visuals and breath-taking special effects.

Above left, a wide range of new live shows have been introduced for this special anniversary year at Disneyland Paris. Left, there's a new epic space mission for all coaster fans to enjoy this season with Star Wars Hyperspace Mountain. Above, one of the new shows for 2017 sees Mickey present "Happy Anniversary Disneyland Paris" in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle. COURTESY DISNEYLAND PARIS

Disneyland Park also presents Disney Stars on Parade for 2017, a brand new parade featuring a plethora of Disney characters to celebrate the 25th anniversary in style. Mickey and Friends journey through Disney and Pixar masterpieces to the land of imagination with new floats, new music, new costumes and never-before-seen choreography.

"In Disney Stars on Parade, we follow Mickey and Friends on a journey of discovery to the land of imagination" explains Emmanuel Lenormand, the show director. "We started with the words that are most frequently used by our guests when they talk about Disneyland Paris. This helped us to create a story with eight chapters and as many emotions. We then associated these emotions with major Disney and Pixar animated films that have proven to be a huge hit with the public."

Disneyland Park is also introducing two new shows in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle, each celebrating the 25th anniversary of Disneyland Paris and the magic of Disney — The Starlit Princess Waltz and Mickey presents "Happy Anniversary Disneyland Paris." Additionally, the park will present Disney Illuminations, a new night-time show specially created for this anniversary year. The show, which features cutting-edge technology including projections, light effects, water jets, special effects and fireworks, transforms Sleeping Beauty Castle on a daily basis. Every evening, Mickey takes guests on a journey to a land of Disney and Pixar films and for the first time, the show also features the projection of live action film images.

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi launches Turbo Track shuttle coaster

Intamin supplies LIM-launch coaster

ABU DHABI, UAE — Ferrari World Abu Dhabi has unveiled Turbo Track, a new, shuttle roller coaster that opened at the end of March.

The three-stage experience, which gives guests an authentic feel of what it's like to become a Ferrari test driver, is the latest addition to the park.

Adults and children will get a glimpse into the advanced world of the Ferrari Driver Academy, where drivers get an all-round, extensive technical, athletic and cultural training to make them ready to join the world's best-in-class driving talent.

Starting in a briefing room, and culminating at 64 meters (210 feet) above Yas Island, Turbo Track turns guests into new recruits, and Ferrari World Abu Dhabi into a futuristic testing facility for aspiring test drivers. The opening two stages of the experience include an on-screen training and performance analysis. Recruits then board Turbo Track and burst through the Ferrari World Abu Dhabi iconic red roof at 63 mph, before experiencing hair-raising zero gravity as they plummet vertically back down. If guests are still thirsty for more thrills, they can ride it again backwards, with the experience including front-facing and back-facing seats, offering two unique perspectives.

"At Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, we're passionate about creating thrilling and inspiring experiences, and we can't wait to share this incredible new experience with our guests. Not only does this unique ride offer heart-pounding thrills

▸ **See FERRARI, page 21**

Ferrari World launched its newest coaster, Turbo Track in March. the LIM-launched shuttle coaster was supplied by Intamin and is highlighted by this 210-foot tall spike shown at right. It is the third launched coaster at the park. COURTESY FERRARI WORLD

Ridewerks to represent Preston & Barbieri in North American market

Francesco Ferrari (left), president of Preston & Barbieri, met with Jim Glover of Ridewerks during the recent DEAL exhibition in Dubai. Ridewerks will now represent Preston & Barbieri in North America. Providing turnkey services for the Preston & Barbieri attraction sales throught the entire process, Ridewerks will handle all logistics, installation, and after-sales support. COURTESY RIDEWERKS

FERRARI

Continued from page 20

for all riders, it also gives them the chance to see the world through the eyes of a Ferrari test driver, creating once again a strong connection with the legendary brand," said Jesse Vargas, general manager, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.

"This exceptional ride is going to be another first, and I am sure that our guests, young and old, will be excited to ride Turbo Track – if they dare," he added.

The completion of Turbo Track was a monumental feat of engineering, following a highly complex process that required the creation of an opening in the glass funnel — a signature design feature at the center of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. The top of the 210-foot twisted spike becomes Yas Island's highest point, and was created by Intamin, the same team that built Formula Rossa.

Turbo Track becomes the third ride to be launched at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi in a 12-month period, following the opening of Flying Aces and Benno's Great Race in 2016. A second coaster, Mission Ferrari, is scheduled to open later this year.

IAAPA economic impact study released on Latin America parks

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) recently released the results of an economic impact study for the attractions industry in Latin America. The IAAPA Economic Impact Study of the Latin American Attractions Industry evaluated the economic conditions of 556 attractions in 11 countries.

According to the report, the industry has a direct or indirect impact on more than 142,000 jobs and generates a total economic impact of U.S. $3.6 billion in economic activity. The full report is available free to IAAPA members, and U.S. $999 for non-members.

"The amusement parks and attractions industry is serious business and a key part of the region's economy," said Paulina Reyes, IAAPA vice president, Latin America operations. "Our industry does more than create fun and memorable experiences for all ages, we also create jobs, stimulate tourism, and generate money toward local economies."

Attendance

The estimated 556 attractions in Latin America draw 87.9 million visitors each year. Mexico and Brazil top the total numbers of visitors, with attendance of 21.3 and 18.4 million visitors respectively. Attendance drives the economic impacts of the attractions.

Direct Revenues

Direct revenues, which include admission fees, food and beverage sales, retail sales, hotel charges, and other sales at the attractions as well as visitors' off-site spending at hotels, restaurants, retail stores, and other venues equaled U.S. $1.9 billion across the 11 countries examined. Brazil's attractions generated U.S. $681 million in direct revenue, followed by attractions in Mexico that generated U.S. $530 million.

Employment

There is an estimated total of 98,208 jobs as a direct result of the attractions industry across the 11 countries examined. When including the jobs generated indirectly, total employment driven by the attractions industry is approximately 142,679.

Fiscal Impact

Collectively, the attractions in the 11 countries examined contributed U.S. $844 million in taxes to their respective countries annually. This included employment taxes (those paid by employees and by employers), sales taxes, and corporate taxes based on total economic impacts. This does not include other taxes and fees that may be paid to government agencies at various levels, including federal, state, and local — such as capital gains, withholding taxes, real estate/property taxes, permitting and other fees, and other fiscal revenue sources which have not been calculated but are also paid by the attractions industry.

Total economic impacts

Across all 11 countries, there is a total of U.S. $3.6 billion in revenues/sales generated as a result of the attractions industry. Brazil's total revenue impacts reach U.S. $1.4 billion, followed by Mexico at U.S. $840 million.

The 11 countries examined in the report are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

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WATER PARKS & RESORTS

Epic Waters in Grand Prairie, Texas aims for new record — Page 28

Beautiful indoor water park, AquaWorld, opens in Russia

WhiteWater West chosen to supply 13 total slides

A 40,000-square-meter indoor water park has recently opened in Novosibirsk, Russia. The park is part of the 100,000-square-meter complex by Kvarsis that opened in October 2016. WhiteWater West was selected to provide 13 slides to the indoor water park. Above, this vista shows the various slides, stairs and wave pool. Below, the highlight of the water park is the massive 12-meter-high Manta slide. Bottom left, the park's AquaLoop,AquaSphere and Constrictor slide. Bottom right, the park's wooden ceiling design hovers over the pools and lounge chair areas. COURTESY WHITEWATER

NOVOSIBIRSK, Russia — Europe's first Manta can be found at Kvarsis' AquaWorld "Akvamir" Waterpark in Novosibirsk, Russia. The impressive 12-meter-high, blue-and-white wings of the Manta dwarf the riders in their raft, making great photo ops for the guests standing on the viewing platform. It's one of 13 slides, all from WhiteWater, in the 40,000-square-meter indoor water park. However, it is the company's Manta that has really become the iconic attraction.

The ride experience is as exciting as its appearance. As riders near the end of the enclosed flume, the monstrous walls of the ride are revealed, building the anticipation for what's to come. What happens next is a heart-pumping drop into the Manta valley below, before the raft rises up the other side to reach a zero-gravity apex followed by a drop back down, then up the other side, and so on, until reaching the Manta's tail, for a total ride length of 138.5 meters.

AquaWorld is part of a larger, 100,000 square meter complex, which opened in October 2016, after three years of construction. The largest water park in Russia not only features a Manta, but other high thrill rides such as AquaSphere, Constrictor, and Space Bowl. "With a total length of one kilometer, our 13 waterslides, including Europe's first Manta, were designed, constructed, manufactured, and installed to world safety standards," said Shurupov Vladislav, deputy director of AquaWorld by Kvarsis.

To build a world-class water park, Kvarsis tasked WhiteWater with helping them create no ordinary destination. "WhiteWater understood our ambition to create the biggest and most unique water park in Russia," commented Vladislav. Checking all the boxes, AquaWorld is an impressive assortment of attractions designed to entertain and thrill guests of all ages.

"It was great to work with a team who has the vision to bring their city the very best water park possible, and the result is one of the most beautiful indoor parks I have seen," commented Valentin Elson, WhiteWater's vice president of business development for Russia and Eastern Europe.

Open year-round, AquaWorld aims to attract 1.5 million guests this year from the Siberian capital and surrounding area.

Daytona Lagoon prepares to make a Splash for upcoming 2017 season

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Daytona Lagoon, the family-friendly water park and year-round family entertainment center located in Daytona Beach, Fla., opened March 10 for the 2017 season.

On the heels of an exceptional inaugural season under United Parks ownership, Daytona Lagoon is upgrading its attractions for the 2017 season, including an enhanced indoor lazer tag arena and a new fully interactive ropes course, which is expected to open this summer. These additions are part of Daytona Lagoon's ongoing $2 million-plus renovation designed to enhance the park's dry and aquatic infrastructure and entertainment offerings. Additional elements of the project include expanding the park's food offerings and catering options, adding cabanas, and installing many new and exciting games to the mega arcade.

"With the addition of our new ropes course and upgraded lazer tag arena, Daytona Lagoon will feature 12 best-in-class wet and dry attractions, including a full arcade with over 70 games," said Barrett Byers, director of park operations for United Parks. "Our expansion and facelift initiatives continue apace and we look forward to further enhancing Daytona Lagoon's attractions for our guests at Daytona Beach's premier waterpark and family entertainment center."

Tyler Currie, general manager of Daytona Lagoon, added: "2017 is shaping up to be the most exciting season in Daytona Lagoon's history, with the most wet and dry attraction activities in Daytona Beach including The Lagoon Waterpark, go-karts, miniature golf, laser tag, Mega Arcade and rock wall. Daytona Lagoon is an important part of the Daytona Beach community and we cannot be more grateful for the support we have received following Hurricane Matthew. We are thrilled to be opening on time and providing a full day of family fun at a family price."

Daytona Lagoon opened in 1998 as Adventure Landing at a cost of $15 million. Adventure landing closed in the early 2000s and sat idle for more than two years before reopening as Daytona Lagoon in 2005. On September 30, 2015, the property was sold to Miami-based United Parks. United Parks pledged to spend $2.3 million in enhancements over the next two years including an overall facelift of the property, new attractions and broader food offerings. In addition to the water park, the location offers go-karts, miniature golf, lazer tag, a rock wall, and an arcade.

Upgrades began immediately and by the start of the 2016 season, the park had fresh coats of paint, new lounge chairs, bright blue fabric shade sails, 10 new cabanas, tables covered with chalkboards tops for children to draw on. Behind the scenes were 10 new water circulation pumps, new coils and air handlers on the AC units and new greasless fryers in the kitchen. The park also spent $30,000 on 10 brand new movie-based video games for the arcade.

In addition to Daytona Lagoon, United Parks also operates Hydro Adventures in Poplar Bluff, Mo. — and is poised to become the next operator of historic Rye Playland in Westchester County, N.Y. Falfas' son, Brock Falfas is the general manager of Daytona Lagoon.

— Jeffrey Seifert

NEWSSPLASH

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Hotel Cascada in Albuquerque, N.M., is undergoing a $5 million renovation that will include upgrades and design changes to the existing indoor water park, **ABQ Surf n' Slide**. When completed, the water park will be called **Q Waters** and it will have its own gated entrance separate from the hotel.

•

The city of **Pecos, Texas**, hopes to have its $750,000 splash park up and running by mid-summer. The city had originally planned to build a $4 million water park supported by a hotel/motel tax, but it was determined the water park would not bring in enough visitors to pay for the park. By city law, a project funded by the lodging tax must generate the income needed to pay for itself over the next 15 years. The splash pad was built as a compromise and was paid for out of the city's general fund.

•

To celebrate its 25th season, **Sun Splash Waterpark** in Cape Coral, Fla., added a new water park component specifically for children. Pirates Cove is a waterplay structure with 32 interactive features including water cannons, slides, and, of course, the ubiquitous tipping bucket. The new attraction was opened the second weekend of the season. A water flow problem prevented the new feature from operating during the park's opening weekend.

•

The borough of Chambersburg, Pa., broke ground March 25, on a new **Memorial Park Aquatics Center**. The center replaces an aging community pool that has been in use for almost five decades. The aquatic center will feature a lap pool for those that just want to swim, but will also include water slides, a lazy river, splash pad, and a tot pool to make the facility more appealing to a broader range of guests. To fund the facility, borough citizens approved a $9.75 million bond financed through a three mill recreation tax. The bond will help finance improvements to a number of recreation sites around Chambersburg, in addition to aquatics facility. The new aquatics center is expected to open on Memorial Day 2018.

•

Following a successful first season for the floating obstacle course/water park, **Aqua Park Rutland** in Oakham, England, owners have decided to make the park bigger and better for the second season. The inflatable aqua course attracted 20,000 visitors during its limited eight-week run. Two new areas will be added to the existing course, making it the largest in the U.K. Some of the new attractions from **Wibit** of Germany are geared toward adrenalin junkies and offer extreme thrills with pieces that are nearly 20 feet high. The new high-course area will be restricted to guests 16 years of age and older. The aqua course is expected to open May 27.

•

Island Kingdom Water Park at **Elitch Gardens**, Denver, Colo., will open three new extreme water slides from one six-story tower. The attraction with its three slides has been dubbed "Mega Wedgie." The three body slides offer different experiences: straight speed slide, straight slide with speed bumps and an enclosed body slide with multiple curves. The slides are part of a $4 million capital improvement program.

•

The Wave, a new Aquatic Center for Dublin, Calif., is set to open at the end of May, despite controversy arising from a multi-year drought. Plans to replace the existing 45-year-old pool have been in the works for a decade, long before the start of the current drought. When the new aquatic center project was approved in February 2015, the district did not anticipate any problems acquiring the 480,000 gallons of water needed to fill its pools and slides. However, the drought worsened in 2016 and many residents asked the city to either cancel plans or scale back on the project. Voluntary conservation efforts and a slightly wetter winter season have lifted most water restrictions. Although the city's water operations department has the authority to delay filling, there are no plans to do so.

The new facility includes an 11-lane Olympic-sized pool, splash pad, interactive water play structure with wading pool, indoor pool and a six-slide tower from **WhiteWater West** of Canada. The slide complex features what the city is referring to as high thrill "amusement-park-style" slides including an AquaDrop with AquaLaunch capsule, Champagne bowl, and twister slides. The city is currently holding a naming contest to name each of the slides prior to opening.

•

U.S. District **Judge Jose Martinez** has invalidated the city of Fort Lauderdale's agreement with **Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts** of New Braunfels, Texas. Schlitterbahn had planned to build a $110 million water park on a 64-acre parcel of land near Fort Lauderdale executive Airport. The suit was filed by **Premier Parks LLC**, the owners of **Rapids Water Park** in Rivera Beach, Fla. In the lawsuit, Premier Parks claimed it was not given an opportunity to present a competing proposal. Judge Martinez ruled that the city failed to follow its own charter when it awarded the contract to Schlitterbahn without seeking competitive bids.

Fort Lauderdale Mayor **Jack Seiler** said of the ruling: "I am disappointed and frustrated, and I believe that many families feel the same way." He could not say yet whether the city would challenge the ruling.

The project has been in the works since 2010 and has already faced multiple delays. The property was once part of the executive airport and getting approval from the FAA to use the land took five years. In 2015, the FAA allowed the airport to sell the land to the city. In October 2015, the city finalized plans with Schlitterbahn, but since the city now owned the land, the City Charter required competitive bidding, which the city failed to do since it already had an agreement with Schlitterbahn dating back to 2010.

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Epic Waters in Grand Prairie, Texas, aims for new records

WhiteWater, OpenAire key suppliers; ARM to manage facility

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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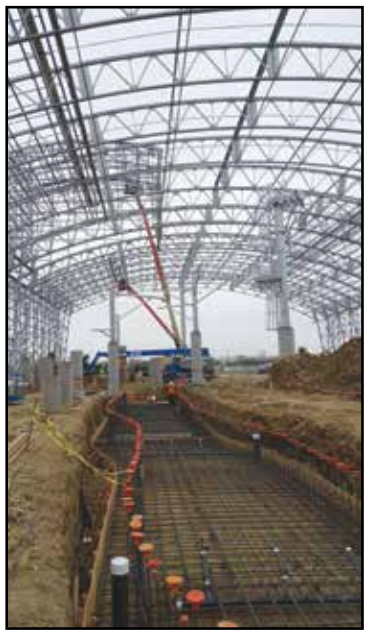
GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — The city has a vision. With more than 170 acres of land set aside for concentrated recreation use, Grand Prairie, Texas, began a master plan of an area that is sure to put the city on the map on a nation-wide scale. Transitioning from Central Park in Grand Prairie to Grand Central, the park land welcomed its first noteworthy contribution to citizens in 2010 with The Summit. This 50-and-older fintess facility gained nationwide attention for its groundbreaking approach to providing a healthy lifestyle to the city's seniors.

The multi-use facility has a gym with state-of-the-art fitness areas, a second-floor walking track, infinity pool, water exercise vortex and more. The 60,000-square-foot Summit also contains ballrooms, a small theater, food areas and classrooms.

With the Summit's success, the city took bolder steps. Across a manmade pond, two new buildings are now heavily under construction. The Epic is an innovative recreation center that will contain not only recreational and exercise offerings, but also a recording studio, library, culinary classes, enrichment areas and extreme sports venues. Epic Waters is placed adjacent to the Epic and will be a new water park for the city. The scale of this one aims big.

The project was voted upon by the citizens of Grand Prairie financed through the continuation of a quarter cent sales tax. Through the process, the city held 40 town meetings asking residents what they wanted in the facilities. The city will own both properties. The master plan also includes a nearby all-access playground, available to all people regardless of physical limitations, called PlayGrand Adventures.

Rick Coleman, principal and senior vice president of development & operations for American Resort Management (ARM), said, "The city will own the dry park and the water park, so ARM will be the operator of the water park. There's this really cool partnership between public and private going on as a way to make this profitable. Our goal is to never ask for another dime as we go."



Above, The lazy river begins its path through the massive construction at Epic Waters. Right top to bottom: supervising construction (l to r) are Michael Hays, general manager; Chelsey Lamar, director of marketing and events, and Rick Coleman, principal and senior VP of development and operations; colorful slides provided by WhiteWater West are on site awaiting erection and the retractable roof supplied by OpenAire starting being installed as spring arrived. AT/TIM BALDWIN

ARM will also oversee the food and beverage at the adjacent Grand Lawn amphitheater during events held there.

WhiteWater West is the supplier for the slide attractions. Truly fitting for its name, some of the attractions are epic sized.

"WhiteWater says there will be three first-of-its-kind attractions in America," said Coleman. "There is the tallest indoor Aqua Loop, the first two-person Aqua Sphere, and then there is a Constrictor/Boomerango fusion. The drop capsule slide will also be the tallest version in Texas."

Along with the nine slides, there will be a water play structure with the ubiquitous tipping bucket, as well as a 650-foot lazy river and activity pools. The lazy river will also feature waves in it. A Flow Rider is currently under construction and management looks forward to surfing competitions in the years ahead. An outdoor wave pool is projected to eventually be also enclosed in the second phase of the project.

"Surfing is a competition sport in the next Olympics. Flow Riders should see an increase in attention. They have such an impact. We can cordon off that area at night and create a Flow House environment," said Coleman.

In addition to water activities, Epic Waters will have a retail shop, 4,000-square-foot arcade and a grille/concession area. A second floor will offer party/event rooms, as well as management offices.

"What makes us special is 39 percent of our roof is retractable," said Coleman. "It is the largest single span OpenAire roof."

Canada-based OpenAire designs, manufactures and installs maintenance-free retractable roof systems for aquatic centers, water parks, malls and various other properties.

Despite the space age feel of the architecture, plants and landscaping will help create a warm and inviting atmosphere.

With a projected opening in fall of 2017, *Amusement Today* asked if debuting shortly after most people have moved past the mindset of swimming would be a problem. Coleman said, "In the summer, we're among 20 competitors counting the [small water parks]. What we're going to do is be very competitive with pricing. With that roof structure, we're weatherproof and we're going to pull the temperature down 10 degrees. From Labor Day to Memorial Day, we only have one competitor in the market and with us you won't have to rent a room to enjoy the park."

Coleman added, "As for weekdays, we're currently tracking 2,000 churches and 1,200 schools. They all become users. You create your programs. You have a day of swimming after you do your 90-minute education lesson. We're looking at swim clubs. We can have 'Mom and me' mornings where even a small crowd and light staffing can still pull a profit."

"I want to bring in the educational component," said Chelsey Lamar, director of marketing and events. "I want to teach water safety. I also want to work on requests for team building."

Currently Epic Waters is projecting to be closed between 20 to 30 days a year for maintenance. During the school season, the hours shift to afternoon/evening. Management feels being open for more than 325 days a year makes the property attractive to passholders and group outings. The first-year attendance projections are shooting for 380,000 - 450,000.

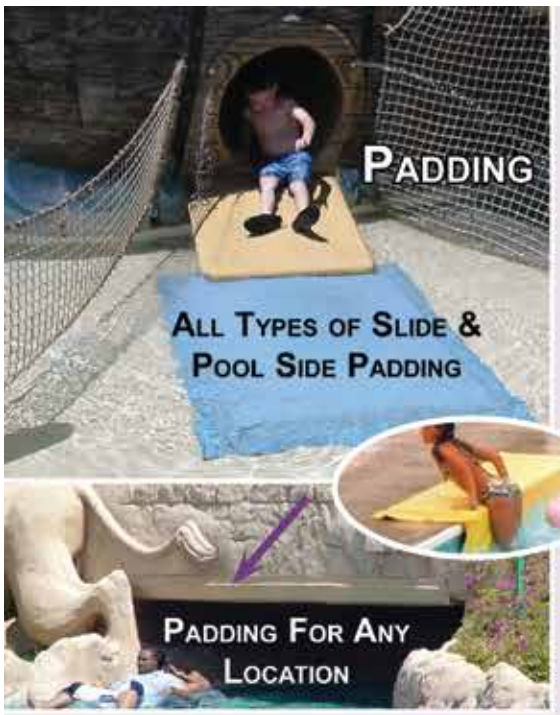
•epicwatersgp.com

About American Resort Management

ERIE, Pa. — American Resort Management is a full-service hospitality management company located in Erie, Pennsylvania and provide services nationwide.

American Resort Management, LLC specializes in the development, consulting, operation and long-term management contracts for independent and franchised full-service hotels. Types of resorts include but are not limited to: indoor water parks, outdoor water parks, family entertainment centers, as well as destination resort properties including golf, skiing, and various other activities.

•americanresortmanagement.com



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Discovery Cove keeps its uniqueness after 17 years

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
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ORLANDO, Fla. — Guests arriving for the check-in procedure at SeaWorld's Discovery Cove suspect right away they will not have a typical theme park experience.

It was set up for just that purpose, according to Rebecca Romzek, publicist for SeaWorld Parks & Resorts.

And, for the thousands that have experienced all this theme park has to offer since it opened in 2000, such as the dolphin swim program, snorkel reef area, white-sand beaches and aviary, it can be a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

"The Discovery Cove team works diligently throughout the year to maintain the park's serene beauty," Romzek said. "This year, new coral formations were added to Grand Reef, bringing in fresh color and stimulation for the animal population."

When the 50-acre park opened 17 years ago, the dolphin swim program and the aviary were the main attractions. In 2004, two more rooms were added to the aviary along with additional guest space on the west side of the park.

Over the years, the installation of the Grand Reef, Fresh Water Oasis, and underwater SeaVenture experience were added to offer activities for guests to fill their day.

The guest capacity at Discovery Cove is kept low, at 1,300 visitors per day to ensure that guests do not experience the lines or crowds associated with other parks. The entire check-in procedure was created to add a personal attention unique to Discovery Cove.

Guests are met at the door of the entrance by a representative. When a representative at one of the check-in desks is available, that representative comes to the guests and leads them back to the counters.

Guests are able to ask questions and give information without anyone behind them forming a line.

"At peak times, the reception team can check-in approximately 600 guests per hour," Romzek said. "To help offset this morning rush, the check-in and breakfast begins as early as 7:15 a.m. so guests have time to settle in before the 9:00 a.m. opening of the waterways."

Water activities end daily at 5 p.m., but that doesn't mean guests have to make a dash to the door. There is time for them to shower and change.

There are a variety of admission packages offered to guests. The resort package includes all food, beverages, equipment rentals and activities with the exception of the dolphin swim program and the underwater SeaVenture. SeaVenture can be added to any package for $49. In addition, all packages include unlimited admission to SeaWorld and Aquatica, SeaWorld's water park in Orlando, for 14 consecutive days around the date of Discovery Cove reservations.

Amusement Today's **Pam Sherborne enjoys her time in the pool with dolphin Kayla during a visit to SeaWorld Discovery Cove in Orlando.** COURTESY DISCOVERY COVE

SeaWorld Discovery Cove: a perspective from the water

ORLANDO, Fla. — In my arms, I felt the dophin roll onto her back, enough so I could rub her belly, which I did, of course.

The small group of people I was with participating in the dolphin encounter at SeaWorld's Discovery Cove, Orlando, laughed, as did the trainer who was in the water with us.

The trainer told me he hadn't told Kayla, the dolphin, to do that. Then, he faced the dolphin and said, "Do you like Pam?"

Kayla raised her head and nodded, yes, while seemingly smiling and laughing.

It was the cutest thing I had ever seen.

Last November, my *AT* colleague, Sammy Piccola, and I had the opportunity to visit Discovery Cove in Orlando. Both of us had always wanted to take part in one of the dolphin swims, somewhere, sometime.

That opportunity opened when our publisher, Gary Slade, asked for a story on the park.

What we found at Discovery Cove was an entire park at our fancy, or at least that is the way it felt. From the moment we arrived, it seemed our hosts had anticipated our questions and they were answered before we asked.

Our park ambassador, June Staley, was knowledgeable and helpful. All those associated with the dolphin encounter, from orientation to the dorsal fin ride, were professional and, at the same time, relaxed and friendly.

It is a beautiful park with a lot to do but not too much that there is any stress. And, I feel it was hard to tell who is luckier — the employees that work among the lush flora, exotic birds, happy dolphins and really good food or their managers who have found a great staff.

Kudos to Discovery Cove. It was great fun.

—Pam Sherborne

Top, new coral formations were added to the Grand Reef for 2017 at SeaWorld Discovery Cove, Orlando. The reef allows guests to swim among a variety of tropical fish as well as rays. Above, SeaVenture lets guests use air tanks to walk along the bottom of one of the park's pools. Below, the dining area creates a great atmosphere for guests. COURTESY SEAWORLD DISCOVERY COVE

The dolphin swim program lasts about 30 minutes. There is a short orientation prior to this activity. Expert trainers take groups of about 10 out into the dolphin pool. Guests meet several dolphins and end their experience with a dorsal fin ride.

The SeaVenture offers a complete underwater experience with guests using helmets and air tanks to take a dive. It lasts about 45 minutes with the orientation.

The park's other activities include snorkeling at the Grand Reef, floating down the lazy river that twists and winds for one-third mile throughout flora and fauna.

And, then there is the food and drink available all day. Breakfasts consists of freshly prepared dishes as well as sides such as oatmeal and yogurt. Lunch includes burgers, Hawaiian chicken, grilled fish, sandwiches, salads, hot dog, pasta, and steamed veggies.

Some beverages include coffee, water, Coke products, the Island Sunrise and Alada Colada daiquiris and Anheuser Busch products.

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Flurry of pre-season developments at theme park

Knott's dives into VR game, retires Boomerang shuttle coaster

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
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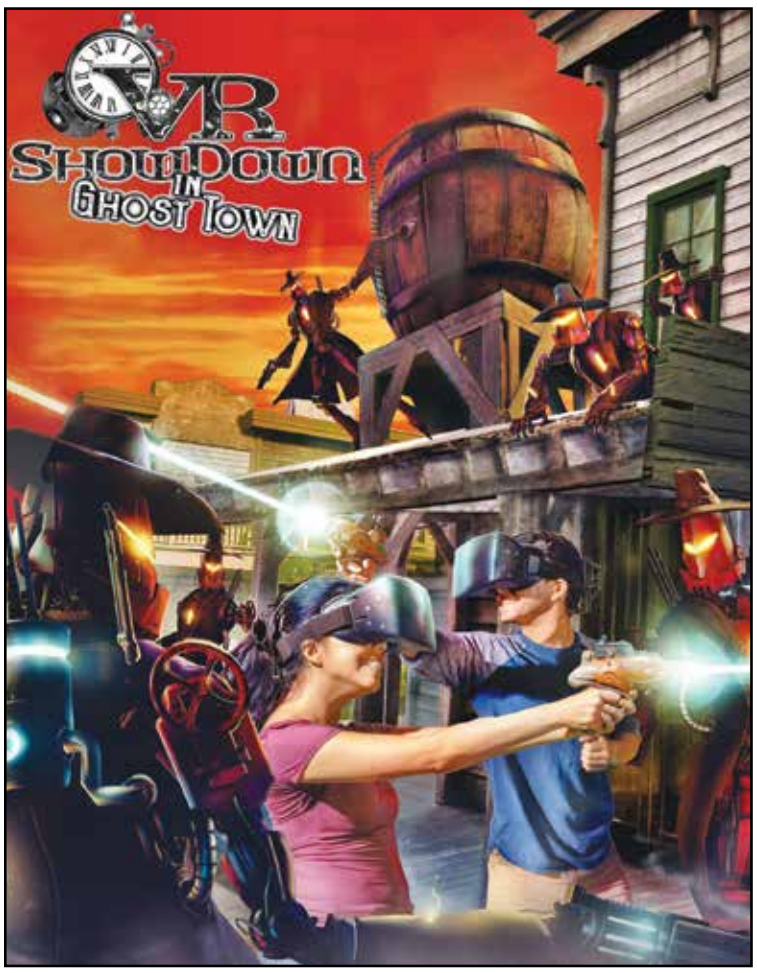
BUENA PARK, Calif. — More than two months before the official start of summer, and well before it was set to unveil several previously announced new rides in both its theme park and adjacent Soak City water park, Knott's Berry Farm was making news in earnest.

The developments occurred before and during the park's annual Knott's Boysenberry Festival. The increasingly popular event itself, with food and entertainment centered around the historic former farm and roadside stand's signature berry, was extended a full week this year — running April 1-23.

In late March, Knott's and parent company Cedar Fair Entertainment, in collaboration with Bellevue, Wash.-based VRstudios, previewed VR Showdown in Ghost Town. The first permanent installation of a free-roaming multiplayer virtual reality experience in a U.S. theme park, it officially opened to the public April 1.



VR Showdown in Ghost Town, a collaboration between Knott's Berry Farm, parent company Cedar Fair Entertainment and virtual reality technology leader VRstudios, is located inside the park's Boardwalk Arcade.
COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

"We are always looking for new and exciting ways to entertain our guests," said Christian Dieckmann, VP of strategic growth for Cedar Fair. "By using a free-roaming system, we can take full advantage of the capabilities of VR and let our guests be the stars of the show. A majority of people have not yet experienced VR, and we anticipate there will be a lot of interest from guests to have their first taste at our park."

Located inside the Boardwalk Arcade, the custom installation invites guests on a time travel adventure that transports them to a futuristic version of Knott's western town of Calico. Players will be met by robotic creations and characters as they embark on a mission, with up to three other players, to defend the town.

The experience, which incorporates the old Knott's time travel character Professor Welles (whom the park's fans will recall from the Kingdom of the Dinosaurs dark ride previously housed in the arcade building), combines VR technology with a competitive, 360-degree gaming realm. Armed with state-of-the-art wireless VR headsets and futuristic blasters, players compete for the highest score while pursuing shared team goals. Participants are able to view and compare scores at the end.

Knott's Berry Farm retired Boomerang, its 1990-built Vekoma reverse shuttle coaster, on April 23 — the last day of the park's 2017 Boysenberry Festival. No word yet on what will replace the ride. AT FILE

VR Showdown in Ghost Town is available to guests at an introductory price of $6, in addition to park admission.

While it's in with the new at the Boardwalk Arcade, elsewhere in the Boardwalk section at Knott's, it is — to the likely dismay of roller coaster enthusiasts — out with the old: Boomerang, the park's Vekoma reverse shuttle coaster, was retired after giving its final rides on April 23.

Boomerang replaced the park's landmark, 1975-built Corkscrew coaster, designed by Arrow Development, in 1990. The two-minute, double-lift ride sent its single train forward and backward through three inversions along 875 feet of track.

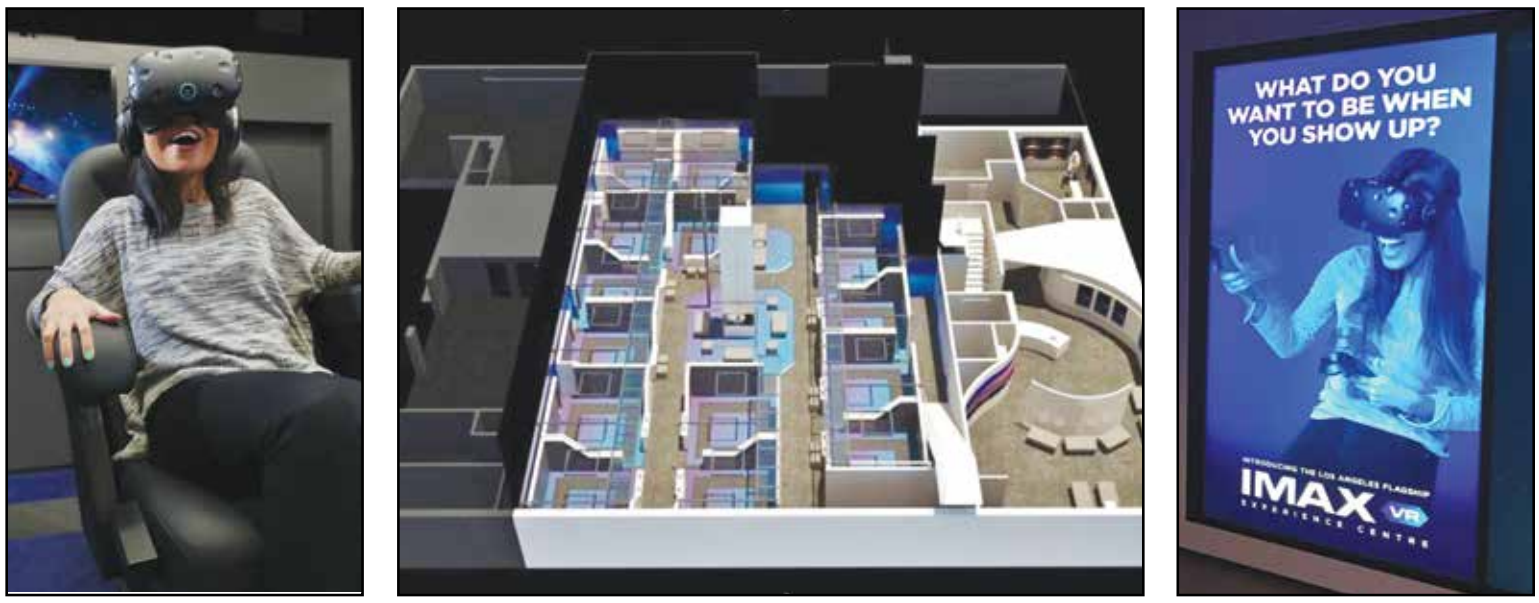
Knott's had not revealed what will occupy the space vacated by Boomerang before *Amusement Today* went to press.

• knotts.com

Flagship of planned high-tech 'VRcade' chain

IMAX opens virtual reality experience center prototype in L.A.

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com



With 14 experience spaces, Imax Corp.'s Los Angeles VR facility offers high-resolution imagery, 360-degree sound and sophisticated room tracking — transporting players into new virtual worlds. COURTESY IMAX CORP.

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Imax Corp. has been synonymous with the big picture in movie theater experiences since at least 1970. Now, the Ontario, Canada-based company is bringing its trademark immersive showmanship — heretofore seen primarily in the form of IMAX-branded movie theater presentations — to the burgeoning VR market.

The IMAX VR Experience Centre, a sleek, high-tech kind of "VRcade," opened Jan. 6 at The Grove, an outdoor retail and entertainment complex in the Fairfax District of central Los Angeles. The location-based, state-of-the-art VR facility features a combination of premium technology and content that lets guests see, feel, move and play in new worlds in an intensely realistic way — much the way IMAX theaters offer moviegoers a differentiated film experience.

With cutting-edge VR headset technology (courtesy of HTC Vive and StarVR from Starbreeze), high-resolution imagery, 360-degree sound and sophisticated room tracking, players are transported into new virtual settings. Realism is enhanced further by synchronized motion seating supplied by D-Box Technologies of Quebec, Canada.

The mini-multiplex-like facility houses 14 partitioned spaces, or "pods," where the VR experiences unfold. Upon entering the sci-fi-ish lobby, customers are greeted by a curving wall of movie-style posters advertising some of the available pay-to-play experiences, which are designed to appeal to a range of ages.

Customers can buy tickets (priced $7-10) and select the experiences and show times of their choice via the IMAX VR website or at the venue itself — just like they would for an IMAX movie. Upon arriving, users will check in and then proceed to a lounge for a quick briefing about the particulars of the play experience. They are then led to the pods, where they are helped into IMAX VR gear and the headsets in preparation for their chosen experience.

The venue's initial content menu included "John Wick Chronicles," "Star Wars: Trials on Tatooine" and a wild "Rabbids" roller coaster ride, with Lionsgate, Sony, Survios and Ubisoft among the content developers. These VR presentations were between seven and 25 minutes in length.

During a media preview at the center, Richard Gelfond, CEO of Imax Corp., was frank in his assessment of VR's commercial progress.

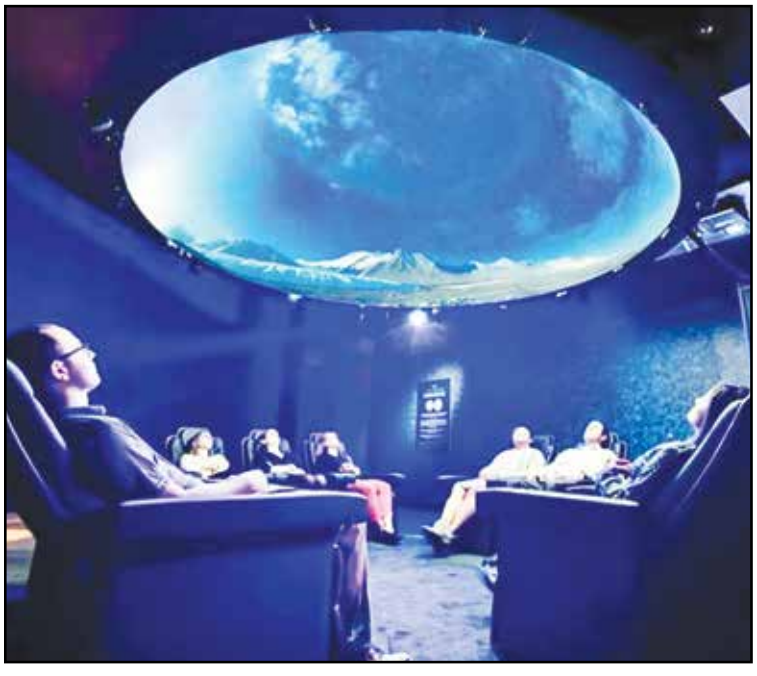
"Whether it's the lack of content or consumer access to headsets, the industry has been in a holding pattern, slow to go mainstream," he said. "It's a complex ecosystem that's in need of a jump-start, and we're here to start to provide the spark."

In addition to building the venue, Imax reportedly has committed $50 million to the creation of premium VR content. Among the companies with which it is collaborating (and in which it has already invested) is Los Angeles-based startup Dreamscape Immersive, which has strong participation from name Hollywood talent and is hoping to open its own VR venue in nearby Century City this fall.

Imax itself said it was planning to roll out five more centers in the U.S. and China this year; as *Amusement Today* went to press, the company was considering additional locations in Europe, the Middle East and Japan.

•imaxvr.imax.com

Mandalay Bay adds Polar Journey 3D experience to Shark Reef



Looking to sink its teeth into an even bigger chunk of the Las Vegas family attraction market, Shark Reef Aquarium at the Mandalay Bay Resort has opened a year-long exhibit called Polar Journey. The high-tech edutainment experience takes visitors to the planet's remote polar regions.
COURTESY SHARK REEF AQUARIUM

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Guests and visitors at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino can explore greater depths of the oceanic unknown via a temporary, first-of-its-kind exhibit at the property's nature attraction, Shark Reef Aquarium.

Called Polar Journey, the new high-tech experience —a collaboration between the aquarium and media-based attraction developer Attraktion! GmbH of Vienna, Austria — provides an unusual and educational window into the Earth's polar regions and the animals that inhabit them. It will run at Shark Reef through March 2018.

"Polar Journey offers curious guests an up-close look at a vital part of our world that they may not otherwise experience," said Adrienne Rowland, the aquarium's director of animal care. "Visitors are encouraged to explore the many fascinating aspects of the polar regions, and we expect they will walk away with a greater appreciation for their importance."

Upon entering the exhibit, visitors are immersed in the polar regions through several interactive scenes, including:

•Ice Caps: Guests settle into reclining seats under a dome screen, transporting them to the Arctic and Antarctica through an engaging and informational film.

•Fractured Beauty: Visitors explore cracked ice structures in 3D without wearing glasses.

•Feeding Krill: Families get in touch with underwater polar creatures by engaging with an interactive wall projection. Kids can explore further by virtually feeding krill to the animals and seeing the response simulated through artistic moves.

•Polar Science: Media-based interactive games provide players information about the polar regions in an entertaining way. Visitors can listen to Arctic sounds in special cocoon chairs and challenge each other through memory games.

Covering more than 90,000 square feet and holding nearly 1.6 million gallons of fresh water and saltwater in massive viewing tanks, Shark Reef features over 2,000 dangerous animals, such as sharks, crocodiles and piranhas. It is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

•sharkreef.com

SeaWorld Orlando is ready to rush the rapids with Infinity Falls

This rendering of SeaWorld Orlando's new-for-2018 Infinity Falls shows the ride's 40-foot drop, making it the tallest river raft ride drop in the world.
COURTESY
SEAWORLD ORLANDO

World's tallest river rapid drop coming summer 2018

ORLANDO, Fla. — SeaWorld Orlando announced on April 13 its latest attraction, Infinity Falls, will debut next summer. Thrilling white water will roar through the new rainforest river experience, as adventure-seeking guests plunge down the world's tallest river rapids drop.

"We are constantly looking at new ways to amaze our guests — Infinity Falls will do that, and more," said Jim Dean, president of SeaWorld Orlando Parks. "From the excitement of the thrilling rapids, to the unique vertical lift element, it will be an adventure that appeals to the entire family. Infinity Falls continues our commitment to investing in our park, and developing new ways to entertain and inspire our guests with meaningful, fun-filled vacations."

To bring Infinity Falls to life, designers were inspired by the rainforests of South America and the flowing rivers found within. Each raft will twist and turn through a lush jungle environment as guests experience the feel of exhilarating Class IV rapids. A unique vertical elevator will lift each raft for a dramatic launch into the river, 40 feet below.

"Water makes up more than 70 percent of our planet," said Brian Morrow, vice president of theme park design experience. "We developed Infinity Falls to tell new stories that showcase the beauty and sheer power of water and the amazing wildlife that lives in it. The result is a new river rapids adventure for our guests to explore, and actively help freshwater ecosystems in a way that only SeaWorld can bring to life."

Infinity Falls is being designed and supplied by Switzerland-based Intamin Amusement Rides. It will feature eight-passenger rafts; a course of 1,520 feet that will deliver a four-minute ride experience; a first-of-its-kind vertical elevator lift and a 40-foot drop height, the tallest river raft ride drop in the world.

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* *"Restaurants & Institutions" magazine*

Larson International supplies two new Tilt-A-Whirls

Kemah Boardwalk and Pacific Park go for a spin

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

KEMAH, Texas and SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Larson International of Plainview, Texas, acquired Sellner Manufacturing in 2011, obtaining the rights to produce new Tilt-A-Whirls and has done so since 2012. Jeff Novotny, president of Larson Int. said, "The Sellner purchase has proven to be a good decision in that it expanded our product offering immediately without the associated development costs and time."

Two new seaside properties have stepped up for the latest spin.

Kemah Boardwalk in Texas was the first to open their installation in 2017. To do so, they retired a Wipeout ride, which was similar in size.

"The classic Tilt-A-Whirl fits perfectly with the family demographic that we have here on the Kemah Boardwalk, and flat rides like this fit our overall footprint," said Keith Hermann, senior sales manager. "We always lean towards rides that have a broad appeal among multiple age groups. We also felt a traditional ride like this enhances the overall ride package we currently offer."

Larson International recently delivered two new Tilt-A-Whirls to two seaside parks. The Hypnospin (above left) is entertaining guests at the Kemah boardwalk in Texas. The custom-designed Shark Frenzy (above and below) has riders at California's Pacific Park riding in the mouth of a shark.
AT/GARY SLADE; COURTESY PACIFIC PARK AND LARSON INTL.

Asked if the Boardwalk was able to customize their installation, Hermann told *Amusement Today*: "We were able to add our own unique artwork on the actual ride units as well as the custom skirting around the ride. There are additional enhancements planned for this ride like a canvas canopy to improve the creature comforts on the ride, an enhanced sound system and a special lighting package to enhance the overall experience."

As this issue of *AT* went to press, Pacific Park was preparing to open their customized version. Called Shark Frenzy, the spinning vehicles have taken on the persona of man-eating sharks.

"We are a two-acre amusement park that entertains more than eight million visitors annually on the Santa Monica Pier. Due to our footprint on the seven-acre pier, we are limited to 12 rides, so as a team we have to maximize the interest, demand and compatibility for each ride," says Jeff Klocke, vice president and general manager at Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier. "It's important to look at the original design of a ride under consideration and then imagine its potential adaptation and fit to our seaside setting. That's how we put a new spin on the classic Tilt-A-Whirl ride to create Shark Frenzy."

When approached with the creative theme, Novotny loved it. "A shark theme had never crossed our minds, as we had focused on an automotive theme for an alternative to the standard Tilt-A-Whirl themed unit. The sharks add a unique element to the ride which is a photo opportunity with the Pacific Ocean as your background," he said.

Novotny told *AT*, "The sharks are pretty cool and they really, really spin with the added fiberglass weight and associated weight location. The teeth are made of silicone and are flexible with dye in the silicone so no paint to peel off. One vehicle also has an ADA accessible door. We have completed accelerometer testing and made higher strength shafts for the vehicle pivot due to the additional spinning speed."

According to Novotny, the themed units will have riders feeling 2.7 Gs.

In addition to the shark motif, the ride features a set of surfboards mounted in the middle with shark bites out of each board. The center will have a decorative canopy, as well.

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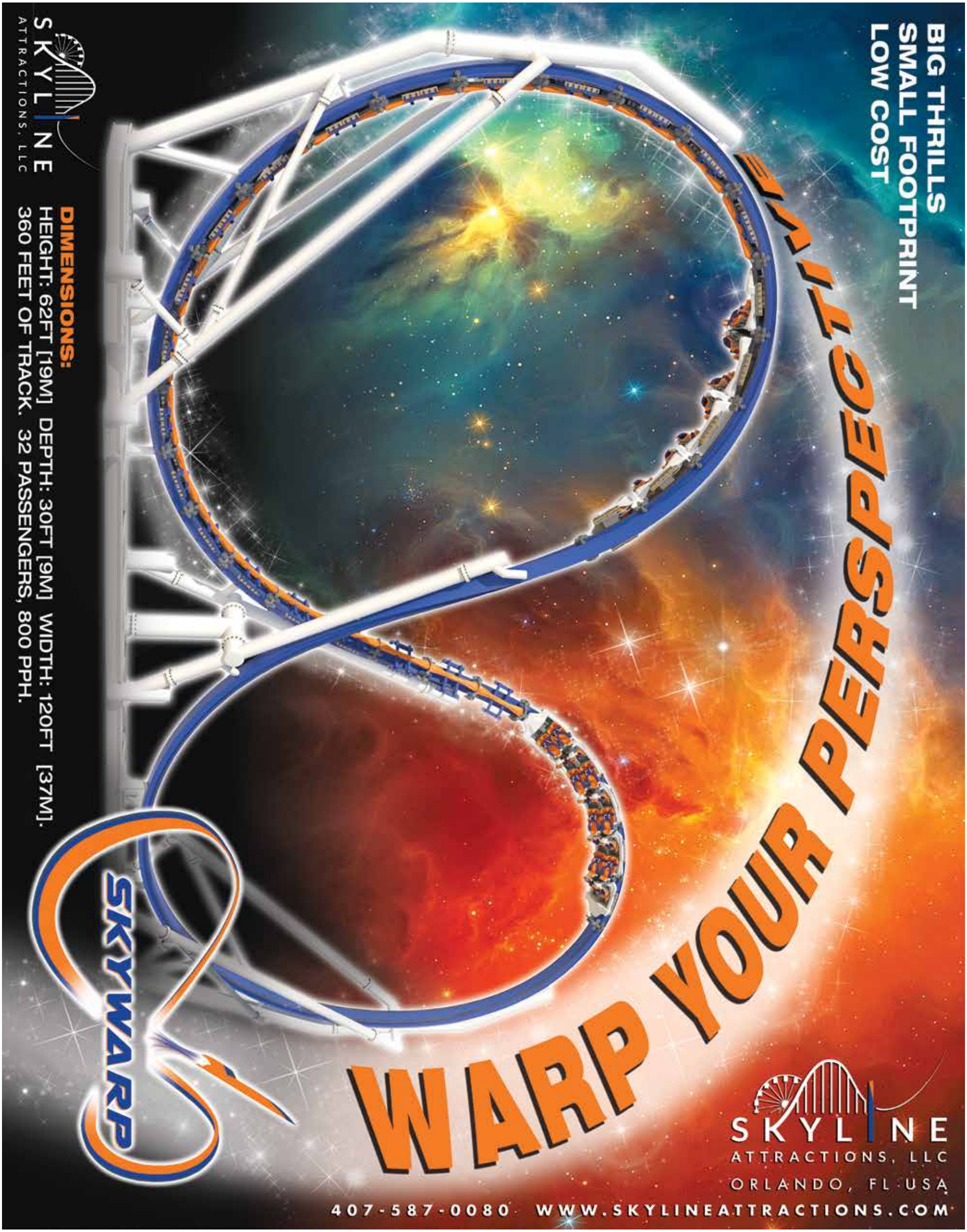
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Park's rezoning win paves way for bigger attractions

California's Great America debuts coaster redo, plans future

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — California's Great America (CGA) kick-started its 41st season with a refashioned steel roller coaster and, thanks to a successful recent city rezoning bid, a bracing new outlook.

Officially opening to the public April 1, Patriot, a conversion of the park's 1991 stand-up steel roller coaster, Vortex, to a floorless seating experience, was rolled out for the media the day before in a burst of fireworks. The completely refreshed ride sports two newly reconfigured, 28-passenger trains with a sleek Old Glory color scheme and bright-blue track on white structural supports.

The makeover compliments the name of the park itself and the theming of CGA's Celebration Plaza section, where the coaster is located. Uniformed military personnel from the U.S. Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard were treated to the first ride during the press preview.

Raul Rehnborg, vice president and general manager of CGA, told *Amusement Today* that the difference in the experience offered by the modified coaster is "dramatic."

"When you go from a stand-up train to one in which you're seated with your feet dangling, the sensation of flying a few inches above the track is a whole new one," Rehnborg said. "It's a great addition for our park."

Several factors influenced CGA's decision to work with the coaster's original manufacturer, Bolliger & Mabillard (B&M) of Monthey, Switzerland, to transform Vortex into Patriot.

"This particular attraction had become pretty tired and rough," said Rehnborg. "Plus, this playbook had been run at our sister park, Cedar Point [in Sandusky, Ohio], when it converted its stand-up coaster, Mantis, to Rougarou. B&M had that technology; they've gotten a favorable response from Cedar Point's guests. So, we anticipated that we would reap some of the same benefits."

Apart from the more obvious changes, the coaster also underwent some needed track work, while the trains also got urethane wheels for smoother, quieter operation. Rehnborg described the park's collaboration with B&M as "fantastic. They are completely supportive, just great working partners."

Patriot, a floorless conversion of Great America's 1991 stand-up roller coaster, Vortex, has a 91-foot-tall lift and 1,920 feet of track, with a throughput of 680 riders per hour. Military service members enjoyed the first circuit amid fireworks during the made-over attraction's March 31 media preview.
COURTESY CALIFORNIA'S GREAT AMERICA

Patriot represents a transitional project of sorts for CGA — the final one advanced by the park's parent company, Cedar Fair Entertainment Co., under previous building limitations at the 112-acre leased property and its own restrained investment. In January, Cedar Fair won a long-in-the-works bid for favorable rezoning of the site by the City of Santa Clara, along with the city council's unanimous approval of a 20-year park master plan.

Now, the sky is virtually the limit for CGA.

"Until that rezoning approval was completed, we didn't have the ability to build new attractions and introduce new product because we [faced restrictions] doing anything over 35 feet," Rehnborg said. "We've now unlocked the possibilities of building higher and bringing in new technologies, and really enhancing our overall offerings."

The rezoning additionally will allow the park to build an entertainment and retail complex just outside its gate and expand to year-round operation. (Currently, thanks in part to its debut in 2016 of WinterFest, CGA is operating 10 months a year.) It will also mean additional investment in CGA's water park, Boomerang Bay, which begins daily operation May 27.

"For all the years when there were questions about what would happen to the theme park, it was really the water park and the affinity our guests — particularly our season pass holders — have had for it that helped sustain us," Rehnborg said. "So now we're thinking about how we can make that bigger and better, and really build off of that opportunity."

He added that the water park is just one focal point of several areas he and Cedar Fair can't wait to address. "Those planning sessions are happening now, and it's exciting."

CGA begins daily operation May 25. To celebrate the opening of Patriot, all current and past military service members will be offered free admission now through May 29 (with valid identification), along with special $30 tickets for up to six guests. The park's new Red, White & Brews festival runs Memorial Day weekend (May 27-29) and June 3-4.

•cagreatamerica.com

2017 Houston Livestock Show draws largest crowd ever

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

FAIRS

HOUSTON, Texas — Whether the 2,611,176 visitors to the 2018 Houston Livestock and Rodeo, March 7-26, came to see what was touted as the largest portable observation wheel in the western hemisphere or whether they came for the various rodeos with its all-star musical lineups or to take part in one of the many other competitions and attractions, those visitors pushed the annual event past any previous attendance record.

Fair management is very pleased.

"Powered by more than 33,000 volunteers, the 2017 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo successfully provided a record number of visitors with a world-class entertainment experience," said Joel Cowley, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo president and CEO. "During the 2017 show, fans were immersed in one-of-a-kind educational and agricultural exhibits, larger-than-life entertainment, and nightly celebrations of Western heritage during RodeoHouston."

Paid rodeo concert attendance reached 1,370,263 this year. Two of the performances landed on the list of the show's top 20 paid rodeo/concert attendance records. Those were: Go Tejano Day, Banda El Recodo and Siggno, placed first with 75,557 people and Luke Bryan's, 75,033 was enough for 17th place.

Another record was broken on a Saturday (March 18) with a single-day attendance of 185,667, when the show had more people on the grounds than Texas' 16th most populated city.

Ray Cammack Shows hosted more than 2.4 million riders during the 20-day run of the show. Of the almost 80 rides on the midway, the top five most popular included the carnival's new Ron Bussink portable R50XL La Grande Wheel, which stands 50 meters tall (164.042 feet).

The other rides on the top five list from this year's Houston event included: the Skyride, manufactured by Seatrek; Windstorm, SDC; Rave Wave, Reverchon and G-Force, KMG.

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo committed $2.17 million to its rodeo contestants this year. The Super Series athletes competed for a share of $1,748,000 in prize money. Each event champion rode out of NRG Stadium with $50,000, plus winnings from the preliminary rounds.

The livestock and horse show competitions drew 32,793 entries. The junior auction sales totaled $15,239,356 including the sale of the Grand Champion Barrow for $212,000, a record, and the sale of the Reserve Grand Champion Barrow for $133,000, another record.

The Show committed $26,065,510 to the youth of Texas in 2017.

See HOUSTON, page 44

FAST FACTS

2017 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo
March 7-26, 2017

•

Attendance
2,611,176 total paid guests a new record; 185,667 guests on March 18 is a new single day record; 1,370,263 was total paid rodeo attendance

Midway
Ray Cammack Shows provided 80 rides which gave a total of 2.4 million rides

Livestock Show
Number of livestock and horse show competitions entries was 32,793

Food
Visitors ate: 47,480 tamales, 38,000 cinnamon rolls and 29,196 potatoes

The 2017 edition of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo drew 2,611,176 guests, a new all-time record. Ray Cammack Shows provided 80 rides on the midway. New was the Bussink portable 50 meter wheel (above) and the Zamperla Endeavor (below). NIGHT MIDWAY COURTESY RCS; AT/GARY SLADE

Ray Cammack Shows debuted the largest portable observation wheel in the Western Hemisphere during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, March 7-26. The wheel stands 164 feet tall, features 36 climate-controlled cabins and takes 22 semi trailers to move. COURTESY RCS

Ray Cammack Shows' new Bussink Observation Wheel huge at Houston

New wheel stands 164 feet tall; requires 22 trailers to transport

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

HOUSTON, Texas – Ray Cammack Shows (RCS) is serious about its business. The show's 2017 debut at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, March 7-26, demonstrated just how much.

New rides, including the La Grande XL Observation Wheel, a Ronald Bussink of Professional Rides AG R50XL model, new games, and new tarps were just some of the things that greeted visitors at the Houston event this year.

And, if that event is any indication how the year will go for the carnival, 2017 will be a very good year.

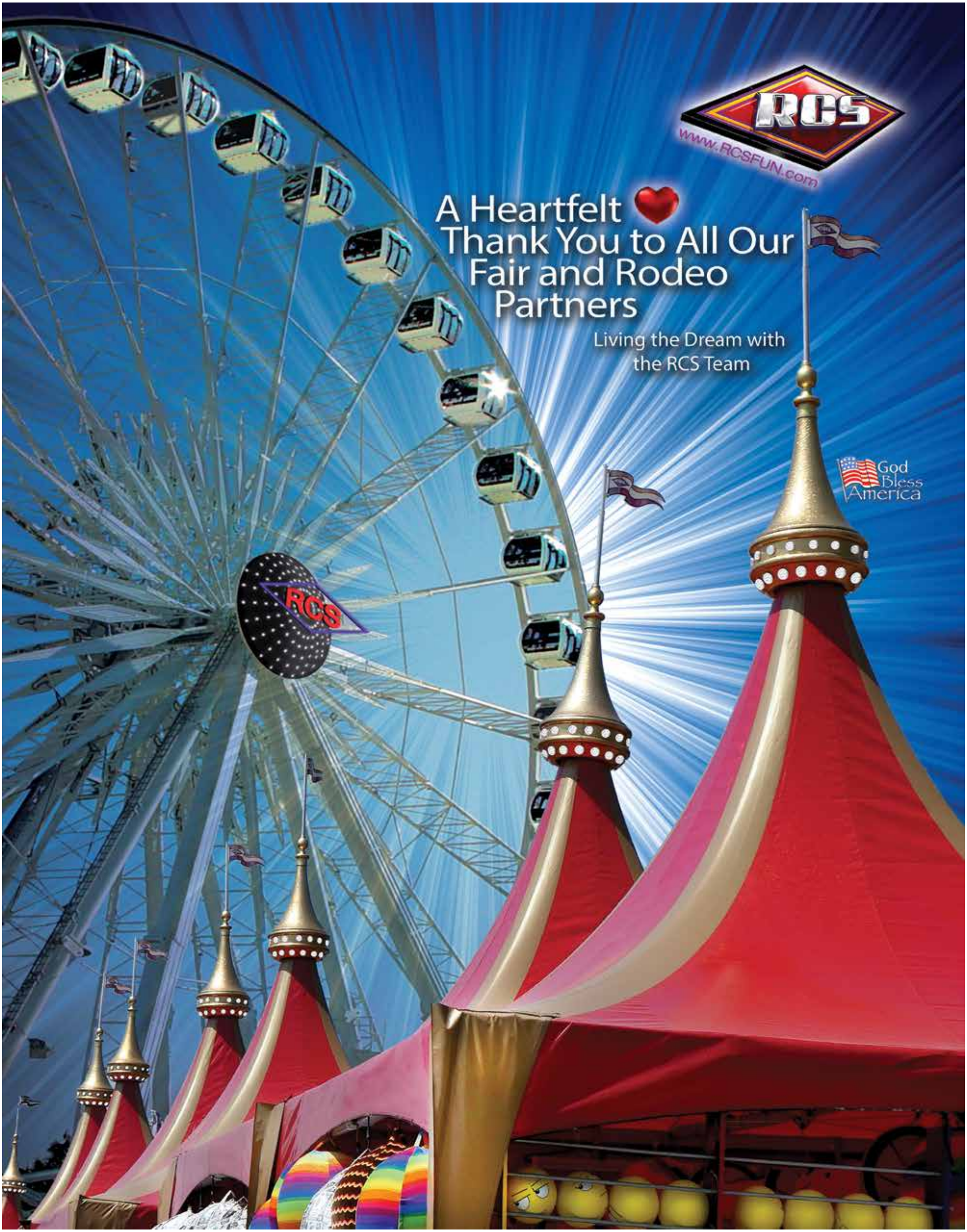
The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo broke their previous attendance record this year, drawing 2,611,176 visitors.

"It was our best year ever there," said RCS owner Guy Leavitt.

The new R50XL wheel is being touted as the largest portable wheel in the Western Hemisphere. Response to the ride was great, Leavitt said. Standing 50 meters in the sky (164.042 feet), it weighs 616,000 pounds. There are 36 climate-controlled cabins that can hold up to eight riders as music plays.

"Most of the wheel arrived at the port in Galveston, Texas, (about two weeks before the Houston show)," Leavitt said. "There were some parts that were actually packed

See WHEEL, page 44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HOUSTON
Continued from page 42

And, the event's social media was successful as well. Since March 1, 2017, more than 357,000 public mentions online were recorded; 281,259,000 fans were reached online; and more than 287,683,000 additional fans were reached due to shares of the show's online content.

Waymatic provided new ticket booths to Ray Cammack Shows in time for their Houston Rodeo dates.
AT/GARY SLADE

2018 IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza reduced to 4 days

GIBSONTON, Fla. — For the first time in the event's history, the 2018 annual International Independent Showmen's Foundation Trade Show and Extravaganza (IISF) will run for only four days.

The show will be held Feb. 6-9, 2018, at the International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA) club grounds in Gibsonton. The IISF is the foundation arm of the association.

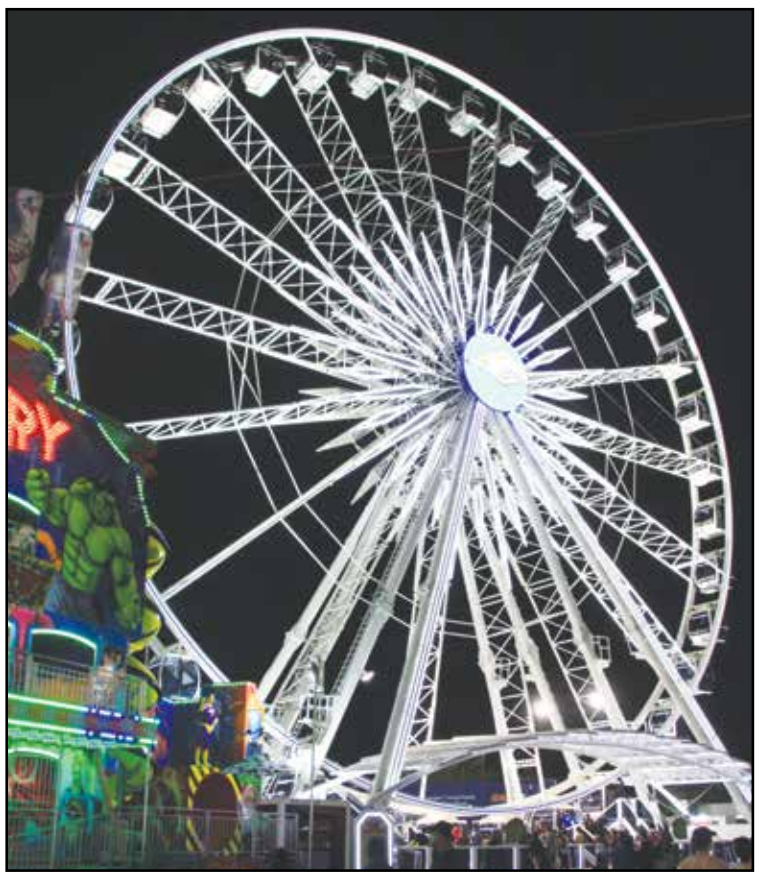
Organizers of the event said reducing the show to four days has been a request made by exhibitors over the last several years.

"It is the outdoor exhibitors who were overwhelmingly wanting the change," said Teresa Rimes, one of the persons on the event committee that makes show decisions. "With more people working, hotels getting more expensive, and traveling getting higher, we decided to give it a try.

"Of course, this change isn't in stone," she said. "It could change again down the road."

The 2018 show marks the 50 years of the show's existence.

The La Grande XL Observation Wheel was carefully placed on the midway by Ray Cammack Shows to serve as a focal point from the freeway against the dual backdrop of NRG Stadium and the historic Astrodome. COURTESY RCS



LED light showcase the La Grande XL Observation Wheel at night (above) while riders enjoy their climate controlled ride in their cabin (left) thanks to Sieman control system (below).
AT/GARY SLADE

WHEEL
Continued from page 42

and flown here to make sure they got here in time."

It was erected using an 80-ton crane with a 10-man crew. There is a 20-foot convex LED screen on the center axle of the wheel.

It is adorned with over 500,000 LEDs. The LED package came installed on the wheel and part of Ronald Bussink's design, said Charlene Leavitt, Leavitt's wife.

Along with the 50-meter wheel, RCS brought two more portable wheels to the livestock show. Both are 33 meters high and both are from the same manufacturer as the XL wheel. The La Grand Wheel was introduced in 2001. The Big Wheel was purchased last year and was new to the Houston livestock show this year.

According to information RCS provided, this was the first time an American rodeo or fair had three wheels of this magnitude operating at one venue.

Leavitt said the 50-meter wheel takes 22 trailers to move.

"Our Big Wheel takes 19 trailers, but those cabins are collapsible for moves," Leavitt said. "The cabins on this new wheel are not."

Leavitt had booked the wheel into five spots this season and hoped for a sixth, a holiday event sometime during November, December and/or January, 2018.

Along with Houston, other events are: the Coachella (Calif.) Valley Music and Arts Festival, April 14-16 and April 21-23; Stagecoach Festival, Indio, Calif., April 28-30; Orange County Fair, Costa Mesa, July 14-Aug. 13; Los Angeles County Fair, Pomona, Calif., Sept. 1-24; and the Arizona State Fair, Phoenix, Oct. 6-29.

FAIRS

The R50XL wheel, although a giant new touch for the carnival, was not the only RCS improvement and/or addition for this season. At Houston, he debuted a new Zamperla Endeavor ride, a new Puppy Roll from Gold Star Manufacturing, and two new water race games from Bob's Space Racers.

Also new, the carnival has replaced all of their game tarps. Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co. sent 800 new pieces of tarp to the carnival prior to the Houston livestock show. The tarps were made from the typical polyvinyl chloride material, but also included metal flecks that gives the fabric a highly reflective characteristic.

In addition, the tarps are adorned with custom fiberglass finials made by Leavitt's brother, Mark Leavitt and patterned after the finial top on the carnival's carousel. LED lights were installed in the finials.

This year, the carnival purchased new ticket booths from Waymatic. The old ticket booths were converted into Guest Service stands.

This year, they integrated food sales into their computer program, which already tracked ride and game sales. The carnival has 288 food points-of-sale.

"Now, we can, at any time we want, go into our computer program and find out what the sales are at any of our stands," Leavitt said.

Waterloo delivers over 800 tarp pieces to RCS

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

FAIRS

WATERLOO, Iowa – It took a village to get more than 800 pieces of tarp to Ray Cammack Shows prior to the Houston Livestock and Rodeo, March 7-26, the former debuting its rebranding at the latter.

And, it took a lot of planning, said Pete Downs, owner Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co.

"We began receiving the fabric in our shop last November and December," Downs said. "But, when we got it, we were ready to go. We were able to plan around it."

First, the fabric had to be tested for its flammability. Then, it had to be tested to make sure our machines would be able to handle it. The fabric is made from the typical polyvinyl chloride Waterloo normally used. However, this fabric also has specks of a metal that gives it a red sparkle as well as making it highly reflective.

Downs said because of the fiberglass peaks donned with LEDs show owners Guy and Charlene Leavitt wanted to use atop the tarps, they had to change the pattern they usually use, increasing the top plate from four inches to 10.

"Cody and I had to make three separate trips for measurements," Downs said, referring to his son, Cody Downs. "There were so many different parts and pieces. It was like a puzzle."

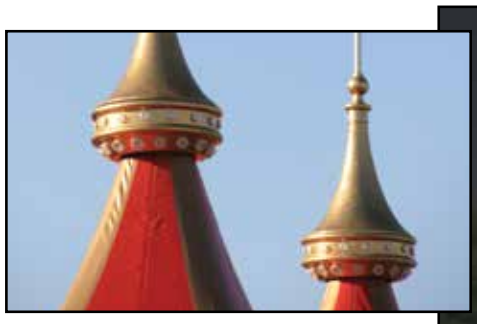
Waterloo delivered a full semi of tarps to Houston one week ahead of the livestock show. Each piece was packaged with the exact ride and/or game denoted so each piece made its exact location.

Once the tarps were put in place, the peaks, patterned after the show's carousel peak, and the LEDs were put into place. Mark Leavitt made the peaks.

This wasn't the only big project Downs' company produced this year. He has big orders for Reithoffer Shows, Butler Amusements and Wade Shows.

"But, we have a lot of smaller projects as well, and I can tell you every one of them is important to us," he said.

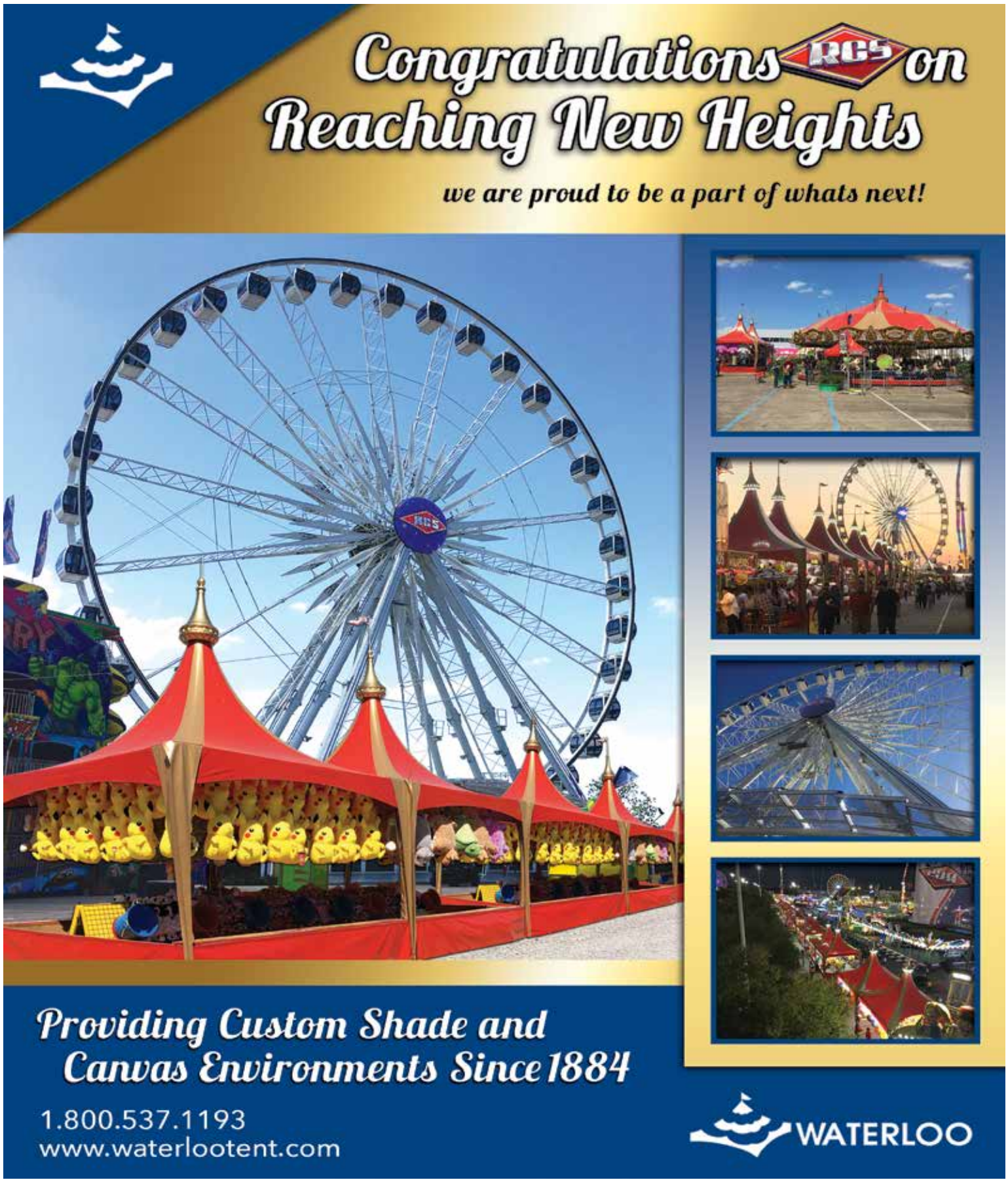
His company has gone from taking about 70 orders weekly to 120.



Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co. delivered 800 tarp pieces to Ray Cammack Shows in time for the 2017 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The pieces included a special design to fit around each tent's peak, which were outfitted with LED lights (above) for the first time. AT/GARY SLADE; NIGHT COURTESY RCS

CORRECTION

In *AT*'s April issue, under a photo identifying Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co. representatives, two errors were made. Lisa Newman should be Lisa Kemmerer and Bryan Schmitt was misidentified as Eric Hamann. *AT* regrets the error and is happy to set the record straight.



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CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Bates Amusements Inc. announced earlier this year that the 2017 season will be its last season. **Geary Bates**, owner of the carnival, was quoted as saying the reason for this decision: "... it is just time."

Bates started in the outdoor amusement industry along with his brother, **Eric Bates** – the latter owns **Bates Brothers Amusements** – when working with **Gambill Amusement Co.** in Wintersville, Ohio.

The brothers took over that carnival in 1975 and continued to grow it, running two units by 1981. In 1993, the brothers decided to split off with Bates naming his show Bates Amusements and his brother retaining the name Bates Brothers Amusements.

For the first part of Bates' final season, the carnival splits with one unit playing eight events and the other 10 during the months of May, June and July. The carnival will come back together as one for the remaining dates, which will run for the months of July, August, September and October.

Bates has assured his clients there is pathway for securing rides for their events with Bates Brothers Amusements.

Along with maintaining his show, Bates' brother, Eric Bates, also owns **ARM Rides**, a ride manufacturing company based in Wintersville, Ohio. **Mike Gill** is that company's president.

•

Stephen Swika III began a new chapter of his life and his outdoor amusement industry business when his show set out in March for the 2017 season.

The Pennsylvania-based Swika family has roots in the outdoor amusement business industry dating back to the 1930s. In 1957 his father, **Stephen Swika II**, founded **S&S Amusements**. The two ran the company together until the death of the elder Swika last August. The impending estate challenges caused Swika III to almost give up on the outdoor industry completely.

However, advice from other veteran showmen had him thinking in other directions, thus the birth of a new show and the continuation of old ties, **SwikaS Amusements**.

Of course, it is a more streamlined business for now. Instead of an arsenal of 32 rides and 50 employees, the show now has 15 rides and 20 employees. S&S Amusements played about 26 dates annually and a large majority of these event managers decided to renew their contracts with the young Swika. He will subcontract with other carnival companies for additional rides as needed.

•

Canyon County Commissions, Caldwell, Idaho, announced last month the appointment of **Diana Sinner** as the new director of the **Canyon County Fair**. She is replacing former fair director **Rosalie Cope**.

In a press release, county officials said Sinner has more than 20 years of experience working with state and county fairs, including with the Iowa State Fair. She has been with the Canyon County Fair since 2009 and most recently served as the exhibits supervisor and bookkeeper for the fair.

The 2017 Canyon County Fair will run July 27-30. **Brown's Amusements** is the midway provider.

•

Placer Valley Tourism, Roseville, Calif., a nonprofit regional tourism marketing bureau, will take over management of the **Placer County Fairgrounds** in Roseville, set to take place June 22-25.

The Placer Valley Tourism plans to renovate the fairgrounds in an effort to bring in more events. Renovation plans include repairing and updating buildings and parking lots, and to explore building an indoor sports and events center.

Placer County will provide $2 million to help renovate the 79-year-old fairgrounds, under an agreement approved last month by the county board of supervisors. Placer Valley Tourism will put another $4 million into the renovations.

The management agreement has a 35-year term for the main 61-acre fairgrounds. A separate agreement for management of the neighboring All American Speedway will run 15 years. The All American Speedway is a one-third-mile NASCAR-sanctioned short-track oval racetrack.

The operation and management of the fairgrounds was previously handled by the Placer County Fair Association, which used to be funded by the state. That funding stopped with the recession, and staffing and maintenance were cut back at the fairgrounds.

The county stepped in with $200,000 in 2015 to pay for deferred maintenance. The county has since been seeking an operator and manager of the fairgrounds since.

Wold Amusements is the midway provider.

•

The Kentucky State Fair Board has launched a new branding initiative that officials say better reflects the organization's standing as the manager of two major Louisville convention centers and numerous conventions and shows.

Kentucky Venues is the new brand identity for the **Kentucky Exposition Center**, **Kentucky International Convention Center**, **Kentucky State Fair**, **National Farm Machinery Show**, **North American International Livestock Exposition** and **Kentucky Hoopfest**.

The rebranding includes not only the new name but a new logo and a newly designed website that has already launched.

The Kentucky State Fair Board, established in 1938 as a state governing body to produce the Kentucky State Fair, will remain the governing entity while Kentucky Venues will serve as the public face of the organization.

The organization manages the state-owned Kentucky Expo Center on Phillips Lane as well as the downtown convention center, which is closed until summer 2018 for an expansion and renovation that will cost more than $200 million.

•

Parents who bring their young children to the **New York State Fair**, Syracuse, will now have special areas to clean, feed and care for the tykes.

New York Governor **Andrew Cuomo** announced in March that the fairgrounds in the Syracuse suburb of Geddes will feature four baby care centers placed around the property. The air-conditioned structures will include private space for nursing mothers and a clean area where parents can change diapers or relax with their children.

Fairground employees will staff the buildings, which are A-frame structures constructed by Amish Structures, a Syracuse area company. State fair carpenters are finishing the interiors and the grounds crew will landscape the exterior.

This year's fair runs Aug. 23-Sept. 4.

Wade Shows is the midway provider.

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At organization's 104th Annual Meeting

NEAAPA inducts Justine Brewer into Hall Of Fame

AT: *Ron Gustafson*
Special to Amusement Today

SPRINGFIELD, Mass.— **Justine Brewer**, who, along with her family, owns and operates **Southwick's Zoo** in Mendon, Mass., was inducted into the **New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** (NEAAPA) Hall of Fame during the organization's 104th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Education Conference.

The March 28 gala had 104 in attendance at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel here.

"It's a great honor," she said of the tribute. "It left me speechless and totally amazed! I can think of many members that are more deserving than me."

As a former member of NEAAPA's board of directors, Justine and her family have also supported the association for many years.

The Southwick's homestead dates back to 1803 when its founding Southwick family acquired the land, planted vegetable gardens, established peach orchards, and milked dairy cows for the local community supply as well as for the family.

It grew as a working dairy farm through 1952. **Justin Southwick**, his wife **Clarice**, along with their three children **Justine**, **Sandra** and **Daniel**, all worked together to keep the farm viable.

With the high school graduation of his daughter, Justine, and the other children soon to follow, Justin decided to sell the dairy herd and concentrate on his passion and interest with exotic birds and migratory waterfowl. He was a true wildlife conservation pioneer and would become a leader in the field of migratory waterfowl.

NEAAPA Hall Of Fame inductee Justine Brewer (left) holds the award with new association president Dorothy Lewis. At the podium is Hall of Fame committee chairman Ed Connor, a past president and Hall of Fame member.
COURTESY NEAAPA

Justine married **Robert Brewer** in 1955 and it wasn't long before they were busy raising a family in Westborough, Mass. During this time, Sandra married and moved to Connecticut and Daniel married but continued to work beside his father.

Exotic animals added

With a donation box out to gather some much needed income, Justin and Daniel expanded the farm to include exotic animals. Together they constructed enclosures to house the new residents of what was now fondly referred to as **Southwick Animal Farm**.

Southwick's grew rapidly, especially through word of mouth. It was not long before visitors traveled from many miles away to view what was happening in Mendon. It also became apparent that Robert and Justine were needed to help with the growing business.

They moved with their four children to Justine's original home and soon had their fifth child. In 1965 the farm was officially incorporated as **Southwick Wild Animal Farm**. With Robert's business expertise and Justine's ability to juggle family and work, the farm became quite successful. In addition, with Daniel traveling all over the world as an expert animal dealer and Justin with his vision, the farm was developing into a highly respected zoological park.

Another venture

In 1970 the Brewers were offered an opportunity to purchase **Santa's Land** in Putney, Vt. Leaving Southwick's wasn't easy but they heard a different calling and they left Mendon that summer.

Within a year, Justin passed from a heart attack. However, Daniel remained with the business. The demand to keep a private zoological park was intense, but Dan nurtured the business until his untimely death in 1977.

Dan's passing put a serious strain on the business and Southwick's went through some troubled years.

In 1981, with the request of family and Clarice Southwick, Justin's widow, the Brewers returned to the homestead to help rebuild the family animal farm. It was renamed Southwick's Zoo, and Robert remained as president until his death in 1995, when Justine then took over the position.

Under the direction of Justine Southwick Brewer, her son, Peter, took the position as president in 2016. Southwick's Zoo remains the largest zoo in New England with more than 850 animals on 200 acres of prime land in the Blackstone Valley. A half-million visitors come through the gates each season from April thru October.

Justine became the 37th person to join the prestigious Hall since it was founded in 1998.

Others honored

The evening included other annual awards presented by NEAAPA.

Outgoing President **Ryan DeMaria**, **Canobie Lake Park**, Salem, N.H., presented the President's Award to **Erik Beard**, **Wiggin & Dana, LLP**, Hartford, Conn.

NEAAPA Awards Committee Chairman **John Guertin**, **Guertin Graphics & Awards**, Worcester, Mass., presented the following awards:

- The **Paragon Award**, for excellence in graphic promotion, was awarded to **Six Flags New England**, Agawam, Mass. for its GradNite promotion.
- The **Pinnacle Award**, presented to a student employee that has demonstrated "peak perfection in guest/customer service" was given to **Frank Hamedl**, ride supervisor at **Quassy Amusement & Waterpark**, Middlebury, Conn. He also received a $500 cash award from the association.
- The **Alan E. Ramsay Safety Award** was presented to **Marie Provost**, **Six Flags New England**.
- The **Meritorious Service Award** was presented to **Paul Cavanaugh**, **Daly Cavanaugh, LLP,** Wellesley, Mass.

New president

Those in attendance also elected a new president: **Dorothy Lewis**, **Xpress Posts**, Danbury, Conn., during the general business meeting.

Workshop topics during the day included social media and livestreaming, ADA compliance, tourism marketing, birthday parties, regional employment regulation changes, and networking with new people.

NEAAPA will hold its Annual Summer Meeting on Tuesday, July 25, at **Edaville USA** in Carver, Mass.

•neaapa.com

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Amusement Expo International 2017 benefited from new territory

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

AEI 2017 Awards
SEE PAGE 51

DALLAS, Texas — Organizers admitted there was a slight bit of hesitation in selecting Dallas as the site of the **Amusement Expo International 2017** (AEI). It had been enjoying a long run in Las Vegas, but the decision to relocate for a year seemed to bear fruit.

"Dallas turned out to be a good destination," said **Brian Glasgow**, **W.T. Glasgow,** show management. "Exhibitors met new customers, and I haven't heard that in some time."

"The CEO of **Chuck E. Cheese** is walking the floor today. That's a good 'get'!" said **Peter Gustafson** of the **American Amusement Machine Association** (AAMA).

The three-day event was held on March 14-16, with a first day of seminars and class sessions, followed by two days of the trade show.

The education courses were filled, much to the delight of organizers.

Tony Leone, sales master from **The Sales Funnel**, was the keynote speaker, kicking off a full day of informative sessions. "You can always work on your EQ and make it better," said Leone, speaking toward building the rapport with customers and employees, noting that a person can't do a lot to change his or her IQ, but that one's emotional quotient is what really reaches customers and makes them return.

Leone

Chris Reynolds, owner of **Funky Monkey Pub**, said, "His sales techniques were good to hear. Customer service skills are always useful."

From there, the Expo offered two course tracks — one aimed at FECs and one geared toward Street outlets.

Mike Abecassis, owner and CEO of **GameTime**, remarked during his presentation: "We didn't steer [customers] to what made the most, but what would bring them back the most." GameTime had just undergone a major renovation. "Our restaurant became a destination."

In both tracks, Food and Beverage became a dominant topic as one of the highest areas of revenue.

Todd Louthain of **Bay Tek** was co-chairman of education for the AEI. "Every year we start with a clean sheet of paper with classes," he said. "We brainstorm. We only have five slots to fill [for each track]. As we talk to customers on a daily basis, we see what are some hot topics with them. We narrow it down from those to address big attractions and trends."

Show numbers reflected both some positives and negatives. The 2017 Expo saw an increase of exhibitors: 157 compared to 151 in 2016. Booth spaces sold were 471 compared to 409 last year. There was also an increase in new exhibitors: 37 in 2017, 29 in 2016. However, there was a slight dip in registered buyers. This year saw 1,010 buyers compared to 1,234 the previous year. This may have been affected slightly by blizzard conditions in the northeast which affected travel, but the most noticeable discrepancy was a drop in attendance of buyers from the West Coast. Non-buyers and exhibitors increased by a handful — 1,356 compared to 1,350.

Despite a small drop in buyers, most vendors were enjoying finding new customers and the "right" customers. With headquarters for **Main Event**, **Chuck E. Cheese** and **Dave & Busters** located in Dallas, there were new opportunities presented in 2017 not seen in years past.

Once again, the show included co-location with the **National Bulk Vendors Association** (NBVA) and the **Laser Tag Convention**.

A common comment among organizers was the increased networking among operators at the show. The gala following the educational sessions was well attended with more than 500 enjoying food, drink, live music and industry discussion. Even more so, the bar at the host hotel — Sheraton Dallas — was full each night with attendees sharing experiences.

Gala sponsors were **Play-**

See AEI, page 51

Top, Bay Tek having recently acquired Skee Ball showcased the game among its offerings. Right, Bob's Space Racers' Jersey Wheels offered suspense and interaction. Bottom, TrioTech brought a four-seat X-D motion theater that featured 3-D gaming. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Amusement Today visits with Gary Stern, Stern Pinball

DALLAS, Texas — Find any trade show that features pinball machines and you'll find players positioned at those machines during all opening hours. Pinball's Golden Age was considered to be in the late 1940s following World War II. For more than half a century, a dedicated following was built around this game of skill.

As arcades evolved, particularly in terms of redemption games dominating the revenue streams, pinball changed as well. By 2002, **Stern Pinball** was the only company manufacturing new games and is credited for keeping pinball alive. While that has changed in recent years, Stern Pinball is still producing captivating games each year. *AT* sat down with **Gary Stern**, company CEO and president, at the **Amusement Expo International**.

Compare the audience at AEI to the IAAPA Attractions Expo.

This has a lot of street operators — bars, bowling alleys, movie theaters, etc. There are now more FEC operators here. IAAPA will have more of our export customers — Western Europe, Austraila, a little Middle East and Russia. We're working on China. And that's important because almost half our business is export.

Gary Stern at the AEI show in Dallas. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Business in 2016 was up for you over 2015. Why?

We are not only in the coin-op arena. We have three market segments. We have commercial operations, but also collectors and enthusiasts, and the rec room buyers. Dads tell wives, "It's for the kids," and get the okay.

How hard is it for you to compete with flashier redemption games?

We're a growing segment of the market. We're very trendy to barcades. Instead of DJs, the entertainment there is games.

Would you disagree with people who say they can't produce revenue with pinball?

I would. We are seeing better and better earnings, as well as better reliability. We typically produce three cornerstone games a year. Last year Ghost Busters was so strong we only made that one.

Today, pinball machines are themed after licensed brands compared to broader themes of earlier years of pinball. Why is that?

If I call up distributor friends and say I have a new machine called Zombies from Hell, they'll say "send me two and I'll test 'em out for eight to 10 weeks." But if I say I have The Walking Dead, they say "Here's $300,000, send me some games." Licensing is a big part of retail. The title attracts somebody. It is more corporate today, but it is important to what we do.

—Tim Baldwin

AEI

Continued from page 50

er One Amusement Group; **TouchTunes Music Corporation**; **Firestone Financial** and **AMI Entertainment Network**.

Lai Games brought two new games to the Expo which had debuted at IAAPA. Here they won awards. A particularly captivating game was called Let's Bounce. **Allison Timberlake** of LAI Games said, "It's visually stunning to look at — full of LED lights, rainbow colors, wonderful music…it attracts players to it. Once they play, it is really fun. It is easy to pick up the game play and it is easy to get real close to winning, so they want to play again." Another award-winning game was called Hypershoot, a flashy reimagining of the classic basketball game where LED arches follow the throw of the basketball.

Harbortouch, a first-time exhibitor, who took an award for their booth, found the show worthwhile. "Foot traffic was very heavy the first day and today we saw new customers we didn't see the day before," said **Sean Berg**, director of education. Harbortouch offers POS solutions. "Harbortouch invests everything free of charge receiving return on investment of that product over four or five years. So, the more we can improve profitability and efficiency of a customer, the faster we receive our ROI. That aligns our customer service, our POS support, and development and technology with the success of our customer."

Two separate education tracks had full classes the entire day. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Rides are not as evident at this particular trade show, but there are still options for those looking. **Earl Heller** of **Rides-4-U** commented how the new **SBF/Visa Group** spinning coaster has been an ideal fit for a park looking for a coaster experience that can easily be placed indoors.

David Swoffard, national sales director for **Triotech**, was optimistic about the XD Dark Ride experience the company brought to the AEI. On the show floor, a four-seat model demonstrated the ride system. "We've gone into a number of FECs that have been very successful. We're going into our fifth season and people are really considering us right along with laser tag. You're looking at less than 600 square feet. This is a four-seat theater here, but most locations will take eight seats minimum and some will do 12. It's all really about the mom and the family getting in there. That's really where we found our niche, not just with FECs, but the stand alone locations."

Bob Cooney, head of global business development for **Zero Latency**, said, "It's a social experience within virtual reality. A lot of VR is very isolating." Zero Latency oversimplified is a concept in which virtual reality meets laser tag, but Cooney feels that description sells the experience short. "Six to eight people enter a room together. You see avatars of your friends and other players and you can work on tactics together." Multiple storylines, such as a zombie apocalypse, a space station gone rogue or a puzzle scenario where players are connecting platforms in the sky are examples of available environments. "I consider this a luxury millennial attraction. The average age of our players is 30 who have a lot of disposable income. Our first installation has been a destination attraction now for 18 months. We really feel 30 minutes should be minimum for the best experience and that allows you to charge [high dollar]."

The 2018 AEI will return to Las Vegas February 27 – March 1 with the same three-day format. The host hotel will be The Westgate Las Vegas.

AEI 2017 Awards

DALLAS, Texas — Numerous awards were presented during the **Amusement Expo International 2017**, they are:

Amusement & Music Operators Assoc. (AMOA) Innovator Awards:
Hypershoot and Let's Bounce, LAI Games;
Launch Code, Team Play

AAMA Awards:
Supplier of the Year, Suzo Happ
Distributor of the Year, AVS Companies
Manufacturer of the Year, Apple Industries
Lifetime Achievement Award, David Cohen

NBVA Awards:
Most Innovative Opertaor, Tyler Vance, Gardner and Lose

***Playmeter Magazine* Award:**
Operator of the Year, Michael Martinez, N2 Industries, Inc.

Booth Design Awards:
Large booth, AMI Entertainment
Medium booth, Harbortouch
Small booth, Suzo Happ

New emphasis on edutainment, top-flight attractions

Marilyn Hannes leads refocused SeaWorld San Diego into future

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment** has been making company history on several fronts during the past year. And **Marilyn Hannes**, park president of **SeaWorld San Diego**, is part of it.

A California native who grew up in Buena Park — in the dynamic midst of Orange County's theme park country — Hannes, having already worked in tourism and hotel marketing regionally and at the state level, became general manager and sales director for that city's **Wild Bill's Wild West Dinner Extravaganza**. In 1997, she landed in SeaWorld San Diego's sales division, rising within the corporate ranks over the next two decades to vice president of global sales, handling 12 SeaWorld parks.

Hannes was named to the top post at SeaWorld and its companion water park, **Aquatica**, in San Diego in April 2016 — becoming the first woman to fill that role within the company's Golden State operations.

A past chair of the **California Travel Industry Association** and the **Visit California** International Committee, Hannes received the 1994 Leadership Award for General Manager Excellence from the **Southern California Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association**. In 2014, she was appointed to the board of directors of the **San Diego Convention Center Corporation**; she currently serves on the boards of the **San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce**, the **San Diego Tourism Authority** and the **Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute**.

Hannes is leading SeaWorld San Diego at a critical time for the park and its embattled parent. After years of criticism and evolving public opinion — and subsequent attendance and stock market declines — the company has begun moving away from orca and animal shows toward more educational, exhibit-style wildlife presentations and themed

As the first female president of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment's San Diego operations, Marilyn Hannes oversees two parks, the management of more than 4,600 peak-season employees and the care of some 12,000 animals.
COURTESY
SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

attractions while continuing its lauded conservation efforts. At the San Diego theme park, this summer will see the introduction of Orca Encounter, an exhibit that replaces the One Ocean killer whale show; Electric Ocean, a nighttime spectacular; and Ocean Explorer, an immersive, three-acre area with several new rides and interactive sea life displays.

"We have tremendously passionate people at SeaWorld caring for our animals and our guests every day," said Hannes, who lives in Chula Vista, Calif., with her husband, Phil, and son Brandon, the youngest of her five children. In conversation with *Amusement Today*, it became clear that she is very much one of those people.

Congratulations on your first year as president of SeaWorld and Aquatica in San Diego. How does it feel to represent such an iconic attraction?

It's an honor and a privilege to lead the passionate SeaWorld team. Leading SeaWorld San Diego specifically was my career dream for years, and there are days I still can't believe how lucky I am. Even in my early days working in the hospitality industry and living in Orange County and Los Angeles, I always told myself that if I ever had a chance to work at SeaWorld, I would jump at it. Nearly 20 years ago, that's exactly what I did.

SeaWorld discontinued its One Ocean orca show in January. What was your sense of the overall guest reaction to the last performance?

The final One Ocean had a very, very special energy level I had never seen in the stadium, as well as an emotional connection among the whale trainers, our team members and all our guests. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience and thousands of people wanted to be part of it. There was a strong sense of love for killer whales and SeaWorld, and certainly a feeling of nostalgia. It was one of those moments in time that I know I will never forget.

How do you feel about the closing of this chapter in SeaWorld's history?

I will always have incredible memories watching and being part of SeaWorld's evolution over the years, and I have many personal favorites among exhibits, attractions and shows we no longer have. But when one chapter is over, I'm excited for the next one to begin. It's inspiring to be part of our company's vision going forward.

What we can contribute to the world is bigger than our parks, such as being global leaders for marine life rescue and tackling ocean health issues. Those core values of SeaWorld personally inspire me. As far as specifically transitioning from One Ocean to our new Orca Encounter, I'm excited to be sharing these amazing orcas in a more natural way that stays focused on education and conservation.

We can't wait to complete the Orca Encounter venue, which looks like a Pacific coastal inlet with waterfalls, rockscapes and trees. I'm also excited about our $10 million commitment to help killer whales in the wild; there's a nice connection to inspiring our guests to care about killer whales and the ocean, plus using our resources to directly help orcas in the wild.

How does Orca Encounter present a fresh and valuable opportunity for the park?

We know that our guests enjoy learning visually and they learn more when they are having fun. Based on killer whale behavior in the wild — how they move, hunt and navigate, what they eat and even how they communicate — Orca Encounter will be a documentary-style presentation helping our guests gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for orcas. A giant, first-of-its-kind infinity video screen will augment a new Pacific Northwest-themed backdrop displaying imagery of orcas in the wild in addition to orca graphics and information about the whales.

At the same time, the orcas living at SeaWorld will display similar natural behavior right in front of our guests. Our behaviorists will also help guests better understand how we each play a key role in the future health and vitality of the ocean.

It is the next generation of sea life experience. We are very excited about presenting these amazing animals in a natural way for our guests.

What can we expect from SeaWorld's new summer nighttime presentation, Electric Ocean?

Electric Ocean is an all-park entertainment overlay, with bright colors, movement and a high-energy party atmosphere. Guests can dance at the Deep Sea Disco and have body and face paint applied at the Glow Bar. Replacing fireworks will be high-tech, 3D projection mapping and laser shows.

Our signature nighttime experience will be Cirque Electrique, a next-gen Cirque de la Mer show on Mission Bay that integrates an LED-lit cast.

One of the coolest elements of Electric Ocean will be bringing our "Real… Amazing" vision to life in partnership with BioPop [Biological & Popular Culture, Inc., of nearby Carlsbad, Calif.]. BioPop will create a personal experience for guests where they can interact with bioluminescent algae that lights up. Our visitors will learn how these organisms play a vital role in our oceans while at the same time be dazzled by their brilliance.

The park's forthcoming Ocean Explorer section appears to be an especially ambitious project. What excites you the most about this multifaceted new attraction area?

Ocean Explorer is a whole new realm that will take explorers on a deep-sea mission. Submarine Quest will be the signature exploration experience — a one-of-a-kind, high-tech, interactive digital journey that will carry guests on a scientific expedition to learn about some of the most mysterious ocean creatures.

Visually, I think Submarine Quest will add so much to the realm, as will the giant jellyfish-themed swing ride, Tentacle Twirl. There are three more kiddie rides that will delight younger guests.

But what excites me the most is not only having children learn while having fun on Submarine Quest, but also giving them the opportunity to immerse themselves in our new, uniquely designed aquariums. Little ones will be able to pop up in the middle the giant Pacific octopus aquarium and move like a crab through a crawl tube at the giant Japanese spider crab aquarium. Guests will also enjoy the moray eel exhibit, where they can learn about these elusive animals.

I'm thrilled about the cohesive theme Ocean Explorer brings to the park. It will truly enhance our overall guest experience.

Looking beyond this season, SeaWorld has a new roller coaster, Electric Eel, on the drawing board for 2018. What will this bring to the park's mix of offerings?

I can't wait to open Electric Eel, our most thrilling ride in 2018. It will be 150 feet tall and will have a loop inversion. It will twist

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SEAWORLD
Continued from page 52

and turn at speeds of more than 60 miles per hour, racing both forwards and backwards. It's totally something new and different for our park and for San Diego, and it will have great appeal for coaster enthusiasts, teens and young adults. It will offer the only upside down view of Mission Bay, too!

At SeaWorld, we are always looking for unique ways to theme rides so that guests learn about and see what it's like to move as a particular animal — in this case, an Electric Eel.

Are you a roller coaster fan?

I am a total roller coaster and theme park enthusiast. I grew up mowing lawns to buy admission tickets to **Knott's Berry Farm** and **Disneyland** every weekend; of course, we also frequented **[Six Flags] Magic Mountain** and **Universal Studios Hollywood**.

Before that, my earliest amusement memories were of the **Kern County Fair**, where my mom would take me on every ride they would let me on. My mom still rides roller coasters with me at age 75! SeaWorld is perfect because it combines my love for theme parks with my love for animals and the ocean.

What inspires and energizes you in your role at SeaWorld San Diego, particularly at this point in the park's evolution?

Helping chart the course of SeaWorld's future inspires me, and I'm all in on that mission.

What we do is amazing. But we can't keep doing all the great work we do unless we are successful. The people of SeaWorld inspire me; their commitment to the animals humbles me, and I am proud to serve them. Every time we return a rehabilitated animal to the Pacific Ocean, I get even more inspired.

There's never been a more important time for this park, and it's important to keep educating and inspiring future generations. I see the light bulb go on for children in the park every day. They learn, they start to care… they will grow up and make a difference. Every time we make great memories happen for guests, it's very fulfilling.

•**seaworldparks.com**

Lakemont Park shuttered for 2017 season; park in the process of re-inventing itself

ALTOONA, Pa. — On March 21, **Lakemont Park** announced that it would not be open for the 2017 summer season in an effort to re-position itself as a "pay-as-you-go" amusement park and recreational area. This is the second time in the history of the eighth oldest park in the country – it began operations in 1893 – to be closed for a season. The last time was 1936.

Closed for now are Leap the Dips (1902, **E. Joy Morris**, side friction Figure 8) coaster and the Skyliner (1960, **John Allen** out-and-back designed) coaster. Leap the Dips is the oldest operating roller coaster in North America. In 1996, the coaster was added to the list of National Historic Landmarks by the **National Park Service**.

Information and details are very limited now as the park hopes to have a clearer picture of exact renovations by mid-May.

Starting with the 1937 season the park became a **Blair County** operation. The name changed briefly from 1986-88 when it was called **Boyertown USA**, with operations being handled by the **Boyer Candy Company** of Altoona. Currently the park is run by the **Lakemont Partnership**, headed by **Ralph Albarano**. Daughter **Melissa Vyborny** has been general manager since 2010.

The historic amusement park will reopen daily late May through early September in 2018.

—B. Derek Shaw

GAME TIME

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OBITUARY

Chuck Barris, who immortalized N.J. park in song, dies at 87

Hosted TV's 'The Gong Show'

Chuck Barris

PALISADES, N.Y. — Television personality and author **Chuck Barris**, who penned the 1962 pop song "Palisades Park," died at his home March 21. He was 87.

Although best known for creating and hosting the mostly-for-laughs, 1976-launched TV talent showcase *The Gong Show* and producing, among others, the popular reality-based game shows *The Dating Game* and *The Newlywed Game*, Barris also was a prolific author. He wrote several novels and a controversial, self-described 1984 autobiography, *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, in which he said that he was an assassin for the C.I.A. during the 1960s. (The agency refuted that claim.) The latter book was adapted into a 2003 film of the same name directed by George Clooney.

Prior to his TV success, Barris, who was born in Philadelphia and graduated from Drexel University, wrote the song "Palisades Park," which was inspired by Palisades Amusement Park in Bergen County, N.J. As sung by Freddy Cannon, the tune became a hit — landing at No. 3 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in June 1962. It was the singer's biggest success.

Numerous other recordings of "Palisades Park" were made thereafter, including renditions by Shelley Fabares, Jan and Dean, The Beach Boys and The Ramones. Cannon himself re-recorded the song in 1987 as "Kennywood Park," named and adjusted for the still-operating amusement park in West Mifflin, Pa.

Barris is survived by his wife of 16 years, Mary.

—Dean Lamanna

Industry veteran John Fitzgerald named Apex Parks Group CEO

U.S. amusement park and FEC company also announces new CFO

John Fitzgerald takes over the CEO role at Apex Parks Group.

ALISO VIEJO, Calif. — **Apex Parks Group** has tapped **John Fitzgerald** as the company's new CEO. He succeeds the late **Al Weber,** an innovative and widely respected amusement industry executive.

Fitzgerald, an industry veteran with more than 30 years of experience, most recently served as a consultant to Apex on strategic initiatives and as park president and general manager at **Six Flags** parks in New Jersey.

"John is a proven leader with an impressive track record of success across our industry," said **Tyler Zachem**, chairman of the board at Apex. "He was the clear choice to lead our organization, and we have every confidence that John and our talented team at Apex will continue to deliver the operational excellence and growth that were hallmarks of the company under Al Weber's leadership."

For more than six years prior to joining Apex, Fitzgerald was park president of **Six Flags Great Adventure & Safari** and **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** in Jackson, N.J., where he began his career as a ride operator. Before assuming managerial positions at Six Flags, he was a general manager and executive at several domestic and international theme parks.

"Apex has a platform and a team dedicated to providing outstanding family entertainment, and I am thrilled to join the company," Fitzgerald said. "Al Weber was my very close friend and a mentor of mine in this industry, and I am honored to carry on his legacy to continue building Apex into the premier operator of family-oriented amusement parks and entertainment centers."

In addition to appointing Fitzgerald CEO, Apex announced that **Brenda Morris** has been named CFO on a permanent basis after serving as interim CFO since November 2016.

Previously, Morris served as a senior finance executive and CFO at several retail businesses including **Hot Topic Inc. / Torrid, LLC**, **5.11 Tactical**, **Love Culture** and **Zumiez**. Morris also serves on the board of directors of two publicly traded companies: **Duluth Trading Company** and **Boot Barn**.

Founded in 2014, Apex Parks Group is a privately held company with 13 family entertainment centers, two amusement parks and two water parks in California, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Indiana and New York.

SeaWorld announces long-term investment by Zhonghong Group

ORLANDO, Fla. — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** (NYSE: SEAS) announced on March 24 that a wholly owned subsidiary of **Zhonghong Zhuoye Group Co., Ltd.**, a diversified holding company focused on strategic growth opportunities in the leisure, tourism, and culture industries, will acquire an approximately 21 percent equity interest in SeaWorld from certain funds affiliated with **Blackstone Group** at a price of $23.00 per share.

SeaWorld and **Zhonghong Holding Co., Ltd**., an affiliate of Zhonghong Group, have also agreed to advisory services and support agreements under which SeaWorld will advise Zhonghong Holding exclusively on the concept development and design of theme parks, water parks, and family entertainment centers to be developed and operated by Zhonghong Holding, including exclusive rights in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

"Zhonghong Group is making a significant, long-term investment in SeaWorld, reflecting their appreciation of the strength of our brand, our potential to grow the company and a shared commitment to protect wildlife and the environment," said **Joel Manby**, president and CEO of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. "Zhonghong Group has a strong track record of performance in the leisure and travel industries, and a solid management team with valuable experience in theme parks, family entertainment, and real estate development in Asia."

"We are delighted to engage with SeaWorld to bring this iconic, world-class family entertainment brand to China. SeaWorld's commitment to inspiring guests to protect animals and our oceans is increasingly relevant to people all around the world," said **Yoshikazu Maruyama**, president of Zhonghong Group's American operation. "Zhonghong Group hopes to contribute our experience and resources in global tourism and project development to enhance long-term value to all of SeaWorld's shareholders. We look forward to a highly collaborative relationship and to serve as a key partner to grow its business and further its mission."

Zhonghong Group has entered into a stockholders agreement with SeaWorld and, effective upon closing of the transaction, SeaWorld will increase the size of its board to 11 and Zhonghong Group executives Yoshikazu Maruyama, president of Zhonghong Group's American operation, and **Yongli Wang**, chief strategy officer of Zhonghong Group, will join the SeaWorld board providing long-term shareholder perspectives and substantive expertise in global themed entertainment and business development in China.

The agreement also contains certain restrictions on Zhonghong Group's ability to sell its interest in SeaWorld for a period of two years, limitations on its ability to acquire more than 24.9 percent of SeaWorld's outstanding shares without the approval of the independent directors of SeaWorld's board and other customary restrictions including voting and standstill to protect SeaWorld and all of its stockholders.

Upon receipt of regulatory approvals and satisfaction of other customary closing conditions, the transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2017. Following the closing contemplated by the agreements, Blackstone and its affiliates will no longer hold any interests in SeaWorld or have seats on SeaWorld's board.

About Zhonghong

Zhonghong Group was founded in 1993, and is a diversified holding company headquartered in Beijing, China, with investments in real estate, leisure, culture, and tourism industries. Most recently, the Zhonghong Group acquired **Abercrombie & Kent**, **Group of Companies, S.A.**, a major international luxury and adventure tour operator. Zhonghong Group has over 13,500 employees globally with varied backgrounds ranging from tourism, finance, real estate, hospitality, leisure, and recreation.

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Zhonghong Holding Co., Ltd. (SHE: 000979) is an affiliate of Zhonghong Group and was listed in 2010 on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange. The company is principally focused on real estate development and management of leisure, culture, and tourism projects throughout China, with a large portfolio of land holdings in China's most strategic tourism destinations.

Amusement TODAY 1997-2017 YEARS OF NEWS

MARKETWATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 04/12/17	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	29.26	31.69	22.45
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	483.50	507.50	316.79
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	68.25	69.81	56.17
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	37.29	38.43	29.8
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	113.04	114.25	90.31
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	1.00	1.77	0.98
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	75.36	84.67	64.00
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	975.00	1525.00	950.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.70	1.95	1.52
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	8.20	9.00	6.62
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	27.57	30.62	21.12
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	16.05	17.41	11.99
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	16.01	21.04	11.77
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	57.60	62.69	47.61
Skyocean International	HK:0593	SEHK	16.22	17.4	7.95
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	615.00	629.00	401.90
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	4.02	5.57	3.22

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Excange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

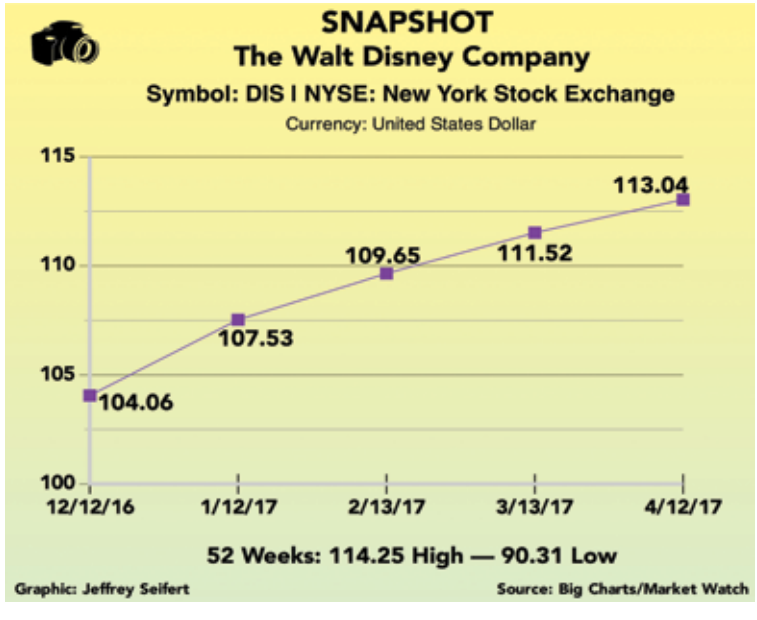
DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 04/10/17	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	$2.620	+$0.433
Midwest	$2.515	+$0.433
Gulf Coast	$2.446	+$0.454
Mountain	$2.640	+$0.498
West Coast	$2.772	+$0.572
California	$2.935	+$0.498

CURRENCY

On 04/13/17 $1 USD =

0.9423	EURO
0.8002	GBP (British Pound)
109.56	JPY (Japanese Yen)
1.0067	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3343	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3314	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Disney extends Robert A. Iger's contract

BURBANK, Calif. — The **Walt Disney Company** (NYSE:DIS) board of directors announced on March 23 that it has extended **Robert A. Iger's** contract as chairman and chief executive officer to July 2, 2019.

"Given Bob Iger's outstanding leadership, his record of success in a changing media landscape, and his clear strategic vision for Disney's future, it is obvious that the company and its shareholders will be best served by his continued leadership as the board conducts the robust process of identifying a successor and ensuring a smooth transition," said **Orin C. Smith**, independent lead director of the Disney board.

During his tenure, Iger has created enormous value for shareholders, with total shareholder return of 448%, compared to 144% for the S&P 500, and a dramatic increase in the company's market capitalization to $177 billion from $46 billion.

"Leading this great company is a tremendous privilege, and I am honored to have been asked to continue serving as CEO through July 2, 2019," Iger said.

New 10-year bonds, others priced by Six Flags

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** (NYSE: SIX), announced on March 30 that it has priced $500 million of newly issued 5.50 percent Senior Notes due 2027 at an offering price of 100 percent of the principal amount thereof and also issued an additional $700 million of 4.875 percent Senior Notes due 2024 at an offering price of 99 percent of the principal amount thereof, for a yield to maturity of 5.039 percent, in a private placement.

The 2024 Notes will be issued as additional notes under the indenture governing the outstanding $300 million of the company's 2024 Notes that were issued on June 16, 2016. The net proceeds from this offering will be used to repurchase any and all of the outstanding 5.25 percent Senior Notes due 2021 through a tender offer and consent solicitation announced earlier on March 30, 2017.

Family Entertainment Group acquires facility

ITASCA, Ill. — **Family Entertainment Group** recently announced that it had acquired **Hollywood Park Family Entertainment Center** in Crestwood, Ill. This transaction is one of many acquisitions by FEG and the third in the last 12 months. Hollywood Park joins other successful parks and entertainment centers owned by FEG including **Bonkers Fun House**, in Peabody, Mass., **Funtrackers** in Corpus Christi, Texas, and **GameRoom Sawgrass** located in Sunrise, Fla.

Hollywood Park is a very successful family entertainment center located in Chicago's south suburbs. The entertainment center features a fun collection of Hollywood memorabilia, a family restaurant, large multi-level game room, bumper cars, electric go karts and two award-winning mini golf courses.

Hollywood Park was owned and operated by **Chris Paliga** and his family since the mid-90s and when the opportunity came to sell the business he knew it would be in good hands with FEG. Paliga commented, "I might not have sold my property to anyone other than **George Smith** and FEG. I have a commitment to this business, the Hollywood Park leadership team and the community – and FEG has the resources to improve on the park."

As part of the acquisition, Family Entertainment Group will enhance the facility over the next year with a completely new games package, four lanes of mini bowling, restaurant seating expansion, addition of four new private party rooms, renovation of the façade and addition of outdoor entertainment elements.

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & EDUCATION

Skyline Attractions annual Skynext 2017 a big success

Next generation gets a taste of the amusement industry

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
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ORLANDO, Fla. - For the third year in a row, **Skyline Attractions, LLC** has hosted Skynext, a weekend event held on a first-come, first-served basis for young professionals who want to work in the amusement attractions industry.

Each succeeding offering has outdone the previous year, according to **Chris Gray**, partner and vice president of Skyline Attractions: "Our attendance for the event started at 32 the first year, 54 the second and this year we capped it at 70 due to space in our Orlando facility."

Gray said Skynext had almost 50 of the 70 seats filled before any of the speakers were announced. **Jeff Pike**, partner and president, enthused:, "This year, we opened our doors to more than 70 eager attendees [referred to as Skyliners], and Skynext 2017 officially became really, really big!"

Held the weekend of March 10-11 at Skyline's headquarters in Orlando, Fla. the event featured eight guest speakers from throughout the industry as well as representatives from **IAAPA** and **Themed Entertainment Association** (TEA.) Evening events and a few surprises capped off the jam packed two-day seminar.

The genesis of this event goes back to when Gray and Pike worked at **Great Coasters International**. Fred X, as it was dubbed, proved to be a success. (That program is still continued today, although not every year.) Fred X became the basis for the first Skynext in 2015.

FAST FACTS

Skynext 2017
by the numbers

•

2 high school students
11 women participated
13 professionals currently employed in a technical or engineering position of which five are currently working in the theme park industry
24 U.S. states represented along with three other countries represented: Canada, China and Austria
55 college students or recent graduates
70 total attendees

Three take-aways from Skynext 2017

1: Participant growth and expansion of purpose. Initially Skynext was created as a talent recruitment program for Skyline Attractions; however this seminar has become much bigger than that.

"Each of the attendees had access to many employers in this industry, most of whom have been hiring aggressively to meet the increased global demand for theme park equipment. We're proud to say that Skynext has seen its share of young people who promptly went on to start careers in the design and manufacturing side of the business," explained Pike.

Gray shared last year's results. "Out of the 54 attendees we had last year, 12 of them are now working in the amusement industry."

2: Attendees are anything but typical. Pike explained: "Skynext isn't attended by theme-park enthusiasts. Make no mistake, these people all love theme parks, but there is a bit more to each of them. Some have full-time jobs outside the theme park industry, and are looking for ways to network with park people and peers, hoping that at some point an opportunity may arise. Some are students, members of their school's "Theme Park Engineering Groups," who traveled together to learn more about applying some relevant real-world ideas to their schoolwork. Some are high-school students (yes, high school!) who are doing some early planning and strategizing."

3: Skynext presenters are also anything but typical. "Our presenters have spanned just about every aspect of this industry, from manufacturing, to theme design, to technology to operations. And there is always one common element that virtually guarantees they will connect with the Skyliners: their story," said Pike.

This year's cast of presenters included **Jack Morey**, **Morey's Piers**; **Bob Sharpe** with **Universal Orlando**; **Mark Hatton**, **Sea World Orlando**; **Jack Kilcup**, **Rocky Mountain Construction**; **Mark Rosenzweig** and **Adam Sandy**, **Ride Entertainment Group**; **Saham Ali** and **David Consolo** with **Falcon's Creative Group**; **Justin Thom** an **IAAPA** ambassador and **Justin Ruka** a participant in the **TEA** NextGen Initiative. In addition, during an on-site tour, **Korey Kiepert**, partner at the **Gravity Group**, took time out of his busy schedule building **Fun Spot** Kissimmee's Mine Blower coaster to tell stories of what it took for him to get into the roller coaster business.

As of press time, the dates for Skynext 2018 at Skyline Attractions in Orlando, Fla. have not been finalized. There is a $20 registration fee. Travel and lodging are the responsibility of the participants.

Skynext 2017 sponsors were **Skyline Attractions**, **Dynamic Attractions** and *Amusement Today*.

SKYNEXT

Above, Skynext 2017 attendees enjoyed an evening at SeaWorld Orlando where they rode the B&M-supplied Mako roller coaster. Right, a tour was provided by The Gravity Group of its new wooden coaster under construction at Fun Spot in Kissimmee. Bottom right, Mark Rosenzweig and Adam Sandy give a presentation on the Ride Entertainment Group of Companies.
COURTESY
SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

AIMS INTERNATIONAL

NEWS & NOTES

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Up close: AIMS International Board President, Timothy Viox

Viox

Tim Viox is a partner at **Leisure Labs, LLC**, which represents **Mack Rides**, **Great Coasters International**, **Mondial Rides**, and **I.E. Park/Soli**. His term as board president of **AIMS International** began April 1, 2017, following **Timo Klaus**, who worked diligently and tirelessly on behalf of AIMS as board president for the past two years.

Tim resides in Columbia, Mo. with his wife Shari and two daughters Cassidy (17) and Eva (11). *AIMS News & Notes* recently had the opportunity to sit down with Tim to learn a bit more about him and his plans for AIMS International:

Tell us about your background in the amusement industry. What brought you into it in the first place?

I was in my fifth year working for **Anheuser-Busch** as a project manager when I answered an internal job posting for a Florida Regional Project Manager with AB's **Busch Entertainment Corporation** (BEC). I had already worked in breweries, aluminum can plants, bakeries, salted snack plants and Busch Stadium. I thought it might be fun to build theme park attractions instead of production facilities — to build something I had never built before. During my first stint at **SeaWorld Orlando**, **Ray King**, **Mack Ride's** project manager for Journey to Atlantis, told me that once you get into this industry, you never leave. He was right! Well, mostly. I did leave, for about eight months when I took an internal position at **Kingsmill Resort** in Williamsburg, Va. Had I come from any other industry, working at a golf and tennis resort would have seemed the ultimate. But, it wasn't quite an adequate replacement for our industry!

How did you learn about AIMS and become involved as a member of the board of directors?

Julius Sais and the maintenance team at SeaWorld were excellent mentors in helping me understand how important it was that my projects complied with BEC best practices and amusement industry standards. **AIMS** and **ASTM** were the two organizations Busch Entertainment stayed plugged into as part of their efforts to utilize the global network of industry experts who gather at their events. From an attendee perspective, I have always admired AIMS for being well organized and having top notch instructors. I was honored when given the opportunity to become a member of the AIMS board of directors.

Everyone agrees, safety is of utmost importance to the amusement industry worldwide, how can AIMS make a difference in terms of safety education and certification?

The manual on how to best operate and maintain an amusement ride has never been static. As an industry, we are constantly learning better practices, means, and methods. The AIMS Safety Seminar is an excellent venue for the dissemination and sharing of that knowledge. Industry experts gather to teach, learn, and exchange best practices. With a growing international presence at recent AIMS Seminars, we are expanding the pool of contributors. Certification is an excellent gauge for owners, operators and Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to evaluate an individual's understanding in the areas of Amusement Industry Inspection, Maintenance, Operations, and Aquatics. AIMS Level II Certified Ride Inspectors and Level III Professional Ride Inspectors represent the cream of the crop of Ride Inspectors.

What do you hope to accomplish in your term as board president of AIMS?

With the tremendous amount of growth in the international amusement industry, I envision AIMS playing a major role in providing education to our growing network of peers. While challenges related to language and cultures do exist, our common interests related to amusement industry safety provide the platform necessary to work through these differences.

I've been handed the keys to an organization whose identity, goal, and purpose has been forged by some of the greatest contributors in the history of amusement industry safety — from the founders, **Watson Brey**, **John Allen**, **Harold Chance**, **Lee Sullivan** and **Art Sellner**, to the more recent major contributors like **John Hinde** and especially, **Mark Moore**. I hope to build upon the foundation laid by them while expanding AIMS International's global impact.

—Karen Oertley

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*A $360 annual active membership in **AIMS International** helps promote safety education and training in the amusement industry. Active Membership is a demonstration of commitment to industry safety.*

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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & EDUCATION

Royal Caribbean rolls out new lifeguard program

Certification programs supplied by IAM, Star Guard Elite

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MIAMI, Fla. — As the cruise line business slowly ventures into amusement attractions, it is no surprise to see ships becoming ever more safety conscious. But even before rides and slides were being added, swimming pools have been a consistent staple on cruise ships.

Royal Caribbean International has implemented a water safety program across its fleet to raise awareness among guests about the importance of vigilance while enjoying water features on the company's ships. This program incorporates gear and safety guidelines provided to guests throughout their cruise. These include lifeguards on duty at all pools during opening hours, swim vests for children 4 – 12 years old, a water safety presentation in the Adventure Ocean kids program, as well as a teen 411 session on water safety. All lifeguards have been trained and certified by **StarGuard Elite**, an industry leading International Aquatic Risk Prevention and Lifeguard program.

The new safety program was rolled out in March and is expected to be on all Royal Caribbean ships in June. The **Oasis of the Seas** vessel was the first ship to employ new lifeguards and implement the program.

Lyan Sierra-Caro, manager of corporate communications, emphasizes Royal Caribbean International is a family brand. "Pool-based activities are an important aspect of the cruise vacation for all guests, and we are doing everything we can to ensure they have the safest vacation possible," she said.

Mike Friscia, president of Star Guard Elite, as well as **Innovative Attraction Management** (IAM), said, "We have a comprehensive lifeguard risk prevention program. With Star Guard Elite, we provide lifeguards and lifeguard-structured training programs both in the U.S. and internationally. We are supporting Royal Caribbean by training and certifying lifeguards." Children under the age of 12 will still require a parent or guardian to be present when swimming in any pool.

"We believe it critical for aquatic facilities to have properly trained and certified lifeguards. It's something we believe in. We think all facilities employing this [program] is great," added Friscia.

The new program will also see the introduction of water safety instruction signs throughout the ship.

Like the amusement industry, the cruise line business has a solid record when it comes to safety. But like everywhere, there is always room for improvement. Most cruise lines follow policy set by many resorts where guests swim at their own risk without lifeguards. Even with a strong safety record, incidents can happen, and almost always involve children. In "close call" cases in past years in the cruise line business, it is documented that frequently it is other passengers who have rescued children, as parents are often less apt to pay attention while relaxing on vacation. This new program is aiming to reduce even the remote chance of an incident.

"Any facility that employees the additional layer of protection by having lifeguards… that is incredibly important to the general safety of the public," said Friscia.

On embarkation day, the water safety program will include a 15-minute presentation for children and parents during the Adventure Ocean open house session.

Disney Cruise Line had recently employed lifeguards for its four ships. Royal Caribbean will be the largest cruise line to do so when the program has been fully initiated on all 25 ships in the fleet this summer.

AT asked about Friscia's concurrent company, IAM. "We are a fully turnkey amusement manager and operator of theme parks, water parks and FECs," he said.

SGE StarGuard ELITE

Royal Caribbean International has started staffing lifeguards at its ship pools. When completed, its fleet of 25 ships will all be lifeguard staffed. Shown here is Splashaway Bay on the Harmony of the Seas ship.
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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & EDUCATION

Following PAPA Annual Meeting, educational open roundtable discussion held at Hersheypark

A packed room at the Hersheypark Service Center for the always popular open roundtable discussions, was held immediately following the PAPA breakfast meeting in March. More than 45 people were in attendance this year. Discussion topics included seasonal labor staffing strategies, drone policies, security operations, guest scams, employee recognition, best food items and more. Hersheypark, Hershey, Pa., hosts the educational meeting each year.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Proposed ASTM Intl. standard will support land-based obstacle courses

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — **ASTM International's** committee on amusement rides and devices, and its subcommittee on adventure attractions are developing a standard that will provide guidelines for building and operating obstacle racing courses. Anyone interested in helping develop this standard is welcome to join and get involved.

The obstacle course racing community has grown significantly in recent years. Designers, owners, builders, and operators could benefit from this proposed standard, currently known as the work item: "New Practice for Design, Construction, Operation, Inspection, Safety, and Maintenance of Land-Based Pedestrian Obstacle Courses."

The scope of this proposed standard also includes removing obvious hazardous conditions by logically applying existing standards and model codes. Also according to its scope, this standard will not address attractions such as ropes courses or zip lines, nor will it purport to address all of the safety concerns associated with the standard's use. (It will be the responsibility of the user of the standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices prior to use.)

ASTM Committee F24 on Amusement Rides and Devices next meeting is scheduled for October 11-14, 2017 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

For more information contact ASTM's **Katerina Koperna** at (610) 832-9728 or by email at kkoperna@astm.org.

LaserTag 360 education event scheduled

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — **LaserTag 360** is a two-day event designed to help owner/operators open a laser tag attraction at a new or existing facility. The event brings together experts from every facet of the entertainment industry to deliver a well-rounded education program. The event, hosted by **Creative Works**, has been scheduled for May 16 & 17 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 8910 Hatfield Drive in Indianapolis, Ind. Cost is $100 per person.

This year's speaker lineup includes: **Jerry Merola**, **Amusement Entertainment Management**; **Dave Wallace**, **Turfway Entertainment**; **Kevin Williams**, **KWP**; **Beth Standlee**, **TrainerTainment**; **Sean Stormes**, **Redemption Plus** and **Lauren Turner**, **TrustWorkz**.

For full event information and registration visit: **www.lasertag360.com**.

Amusement TODAY 1997-2017 YEARS OF NEWS

Museum Progress Report

This space is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today*, a corporate partner of the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives.

Side friction coaster car mystery solved!

The identity of the anonymous red and green roller coaster car in the March issue ***AT*** (page 37) appears to be no longer a mystery. It seems the car has been well traveled and is survived by two siblings. While it has spent most of its mileage in the Philadelphia area, the longest trip it ever took was from the loading dock at **Philadelphia Toboggan Company** in Lansdale, Pa., to **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** in beautiful Santa Cruz, Calif.

Tom Rebbie, president of Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters (PTC), was surprised to see the photo of the car, and quickly called both the **NRCMA** and *AT* to explain the rich history of the wayward side friction car. He claims that in late 1980, during the demolition of **Willow Grove Park**, in Montgomery County, Pa., the late **Samuel H. High III**, then president of PTC, accompanied him along with a crew to rescue some early equipment at the park. High had permission to remove some side friction cars from the old Scenic Coaster. The ride, built in 1896, had a few replacement cars sitting near the station. Tom remembered loading the company truck with three side friction cars from the Nickel Scenic, while a short distance away a wrecking crew was busy bringing down the Alps, the last **L.A. Thompson** Scenic Railway in the Western Hemisphere.

Back in Lansdale, the best car of the three was rehabilitated, while the other two cars sat on the end of the loading dock for several years. According to Rebbie, High eventually sent one car to his friend **Charles Canfield** in Santa Cruz. The second car found a home at

Above, PTC's fully restored side friction coaster car from Willow Grove Park. Below, NRCMA's car from the same ride, donated by Charles Canfiled, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.

COURTESY PTC; NRCMA FILE

Kings Island after **Charles Dinn** mentioned his interest in having the artifact, during the construction of The Beast. He doesn't know what happened to the Kings Island car, but the restored car, adorned with the company logo and painted white and gold, has been moved into the company's conference room for all visitors to admire. Meanwhile, the Canfield donation now sits in Plainview, Texas, waiting for its own spot in the limelight.

Rebbie pointed to his company Facebook page for more information. The painstaking move of the car into the conference room is well-documented with photographs:

"An old friend returned to our office and has found a home in our conference room. This beautiful antique PTC coaster car once rode the tracks of The Nickel Scenic Roller Coaster, one of Willow Grove Park's famous rides. The back used to state that old and now famous line, 'Life is Lark.' In the late 1970s, Sam High III, then president of PTC, headed to Willow Grove Park...he brought along with him three employees, one of whom was coaster shop foreman Tom Rebbie. They brought the coaster car back to the PTC shop and two employees refurbished it to its former glory. Once the restoration was finished, Sam took the two-seat coaster car to his home. It was placed in Sam's family room, providing his grandchildren over 20 years of enjoyment, and was quite a conversation piece. After Sam passed away in 2011, the fate of the coaster car found its way to auction. This spring, Tom Rebbie, company president, ***Janine Rebbie****, administrative assistant, and* ***Alex Nagel****, company archivist, discovered the coaster car up for auction and attended with the goal of bringing a piece of history home to PTCI. It was a successful trip. After arriving back at PTCI's shop, the coaster car was touched up and given a little tender love... [afterward] moving this stunning piece of history into our office conference room."*

Thanks, Tom, for clearing up one mystery. For me, that's one down and thousands of unidentified cars and photos to go!

—Richard Munch, NRCMA Historian

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

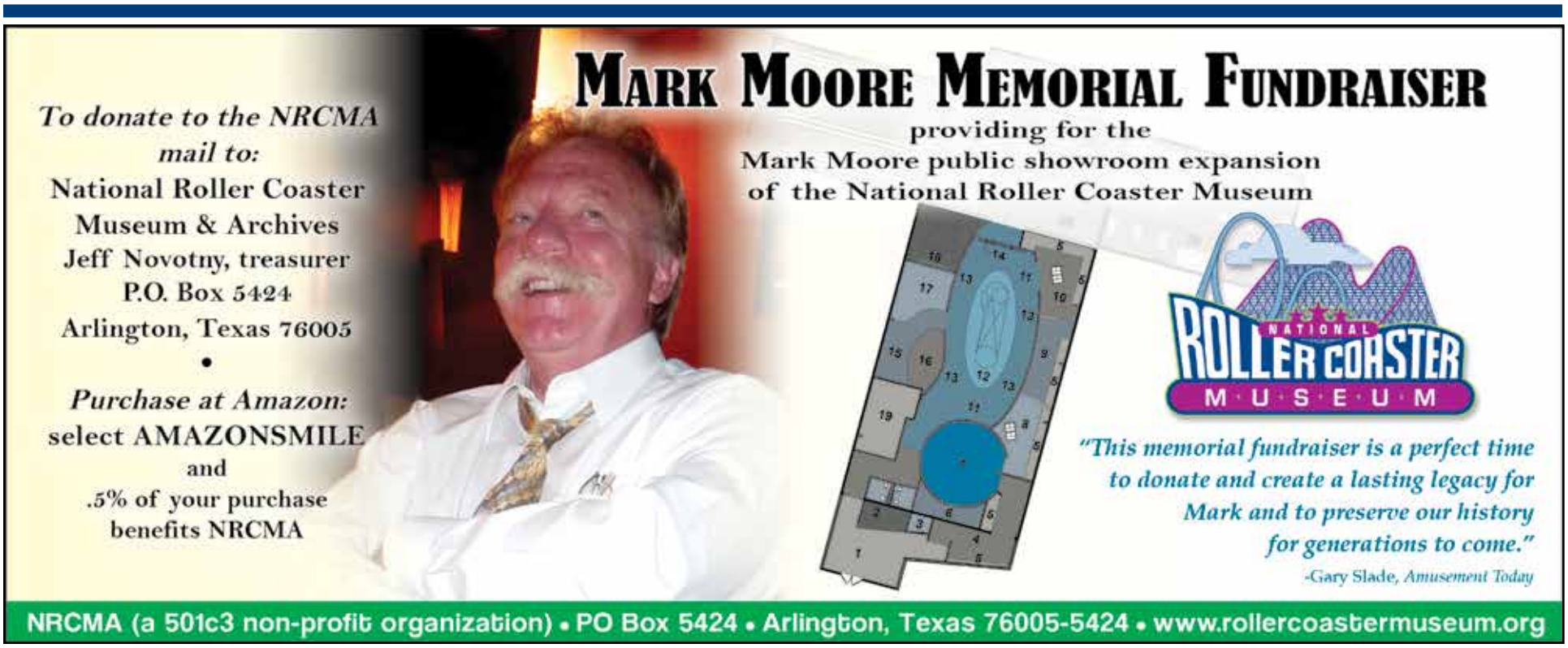
AT: *Richard Munch*

MAY

•1906: The new amusement center, **Luna Park**, opened on May 28, in Four Mile Run in Arlington, Va. What was just a field with some rocky outcroppings six months earlier was now a full-fledged park with numerous rides and attractions. *The Washington Post* reported: "There are 30 places of entertainment along the great trail waiting to welcome large crowds of pleasure seekers. The new **Ingersoll** enterprise, will open on Monday…everything is in readiness for the opening, and thousands will doubtless make their way to the summer amusement city built in the hills, to enjoy the cool breezes and numerous attractions of the place." The park also opened with a Figure Eight roller coaster and a Chutes among its rides. Unfortunately, a disastrous fire in April 1915 would spell the end of the famous park, which was located just south of Washington, D.C.

•1907: Opening on May 29, Atlanta, Ga.'s newest park, the **White City**, brought another amusement center to the growing metropolis. The advertisements for the new season would suggest the new facility was a pleasure resort, park and picnic grounds combined. *The Atlanta Constitution* claimed the park was built at an immense capital expense and included all kinds of new and fine pleasure devices. This would include a Figure Eight roller coaster, the second in the city (the other at **Ponce De Leon Park**). The auspicious opening, despite the cloudy weather, had thousands of people in attendance, with the trolleys lined up at the main entrance. Those who visited had only words of praise for the new amusement resort, culminating with the brilliant scene after dark when artificial light made the midway glow.

•1908: Electric Park, in Baltimore, Md., opened the season on May 30 with a new line of attractions and buildings, including a new Scenic Railway, the Dazy Dazer, designed by **Breinig Construction Company**. At 50 feet high, with a track length of 2900 feet, it opened in early June, headlining a new group of attractions presented during the 1908 season. With a new management team in control, they hired architects **Copeland and Dole** fresh from their design work at the **Jamestown Exposition** to assist with park expansion, including a new ballroom. The park also added a grand carousel, Shoot the Shoots (Chutes) and Helter Skelter. It marked the park's largest expansion in its short history.



Dollywood properties fulfill economic promise

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — The **Dollywood Co.** parks and businesses set records in 2016, including the highest attendance level ever for **Dollywood** theme park. Dollywood and **Dollywood's Splash Country** exceeded a combined threshold of three million guests for the first time since 2007. **Dollywood's DreamMore Resort and Spa** and **Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Cabins** set occupancy and revenue records, as well, while **Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede** set an attendance record. All of Parton's businesses combined entertained more than five million guests last year.

In 2013, Parton promised to deliver $300 million in Smoky Mountains region investment within 10 years; at its current rate of expansion, her company is exceeding that goal. A study commissioned that year to project Dollywood's economic impact and future growth put its impact on the region at $1.1 billion annually, creating more than 12,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs. It was projected that Dollywood's 10-year investment would create 2,500 additional direct, indirect and induced jobs in the area and produce $7 million in additional state and local taxes.

An update to the study completed in early 2017 by the University of Tennessee shows that Dollywood already has exceeded those levels after setting earnings records in each of the previous five years. It now is projected that Dollywood's impact will exceed $1.84 billion annually and create more than 23,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs in the region.

See more on VIDEOTRACK at AmusementToday.com

Universal Studios Hollywood boosts park, CityWalk offerings

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — After breaking attendance records last year, thanks largely to the debut of its Wizarding World of Harry Potter themed land, **Universal Studios Hollywood** is aiming for another summer of Los Angeles freeway-level foot traffic with improved and new offerings on both sides of the gate.

In the theme park, the Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey dark ride has received a significant technological upgrade in the form of enhanced 4K-HD (high definition) ride film projection. Originally projected at 60 frames-per-second, the new ride media now displays at twice the frame rate — delivering more clarity and depth than previously displayed.

At the adjacent **Universal CityWalk** entertainment district, which over the last two decades has become a tourist magnet unto itself, many millions have been spent on recent expansions and improvements. The investment continues with the newly opened **Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville** restaurant, the first in the destination eatery chain to be located in California.

Sporting a tropical paradise theme described as "a state of mind" — one inspired by Buffett's hit 1977 song of the same name — Margaritaville serves lunch and dinner in a casual environment amid palm trees, thatched enclaves, surfboard tables and the central, enigmatically named Somewhere Bar.

Along with handcrafted cocktails, the menu features signature dishes such as LandShark Lager Fish & Chips, Jimmy's Jammin' Jambalaya, Volcano Nachos and Cheeseburger in Paradise.

The restaurant also offers live entertainment. In fact, the 70-year-old Buffett himself delivered an invitation-only grand opening celebration performance on March 30.

Among other recent upgrades at Universal CityWalk is a complete redesign of the 19-screen **Universal Cinema**, now featuring state-of-the-art projection and deluxe recliner seating in screening room-quality auditoriums.

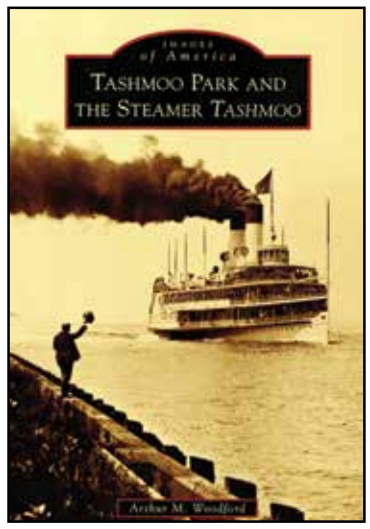
• **universalstudioshollywood.com**

Images of America

Michigan's Tashmoo Park featured in book

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

BOOK REVIEW



HARSON'S ISLAND, Mich. — Those familiar with amusement park history are likely familiar with the term "trolley park." An amusement park or other recreation facility was often built at the end of a city trolley line to generate business for the trolley on the weekends.

Less well known are parks that were built or owned by shipping lines for pretty much the same purpose. Steamships that provided commuter service during the week, often needed a destination for the ships on the weekends.

One such park, just outside of Detroit, is the subject of an Images of America book from Arcadia Publishing. The book is titled *Tashmoo Park and The Steamer Tashmoo*. The book follows the original Images of America format with black & white photos portraying the history of the park along with it's namesake steamship

Tashmoo Park, on Harsen's Island in the St. Clair River, just outside of Detroit, was developed as an amusement park by the White Star Line. The shipping line started out small — investing a few thousand dollars in a pavilion, picnic grounds, baseball diamonds and a bicycle track. As the popularity of the park increased, more attractions such as a dance hall, bathhouse and swimming beach were added.

The park became so successful, the White Star Line commissioned a new steamship, The Tashmoo, to bring passengers to the park.

Much of the publication is dedicated to the steamer Tashmoo, as well as some of the other popular Great Lakes steamers and destinations popular at the time, including Bob-Lo Island.

In 1916, a Merry-Go-Round was added but the park never featured a lot of rides. Instead it was popular for its picnic grounds, baseball fields, dining halls and the swimming beach.

Company outings were extremely popular with some, such as the picnic for Packard Car Company employees, requiring the use of extra steamers. Sometimes steamers were brought in even from competing lines such as those servicing Bob-Lo Island or Put-In-Bay near Sandusky, Ohio.

Sadly, in 1936, on one of the popular evening dance cruises, the Tashmoo struck an uncharted underwater obstruction shortly after leaving Sugar Island. It began to take on water and the crew headed to nearby Amsterdam Dock where passengers and crew disembarked. The next morning, the beloved steamer was sitting half submerged at the bottom of the river in 18 feet of water.

Divers determined the hull was beyond repair and the ship was scrapped. The White Star Line chartered boats from other companies to provide service to Tashmoo park, but it was a losing effort. The combination of the loss of the steamer, the Great Depression and the uncertainties of World War II were too much. The park struggled for 15 more years, eventually closing at the end of the 1951 season.

Historian Arthur Woodford selected images from a variety of sources including libraries and a number of private collections to tell the story of a park from a far simpler time.

The 128-page softcover book, *Images of America, Tashmoo Park and The Steamer Tashmoo* is available for $21.99 from online book retailers or directly from Arcadia Press at arcadiapublishing.com.

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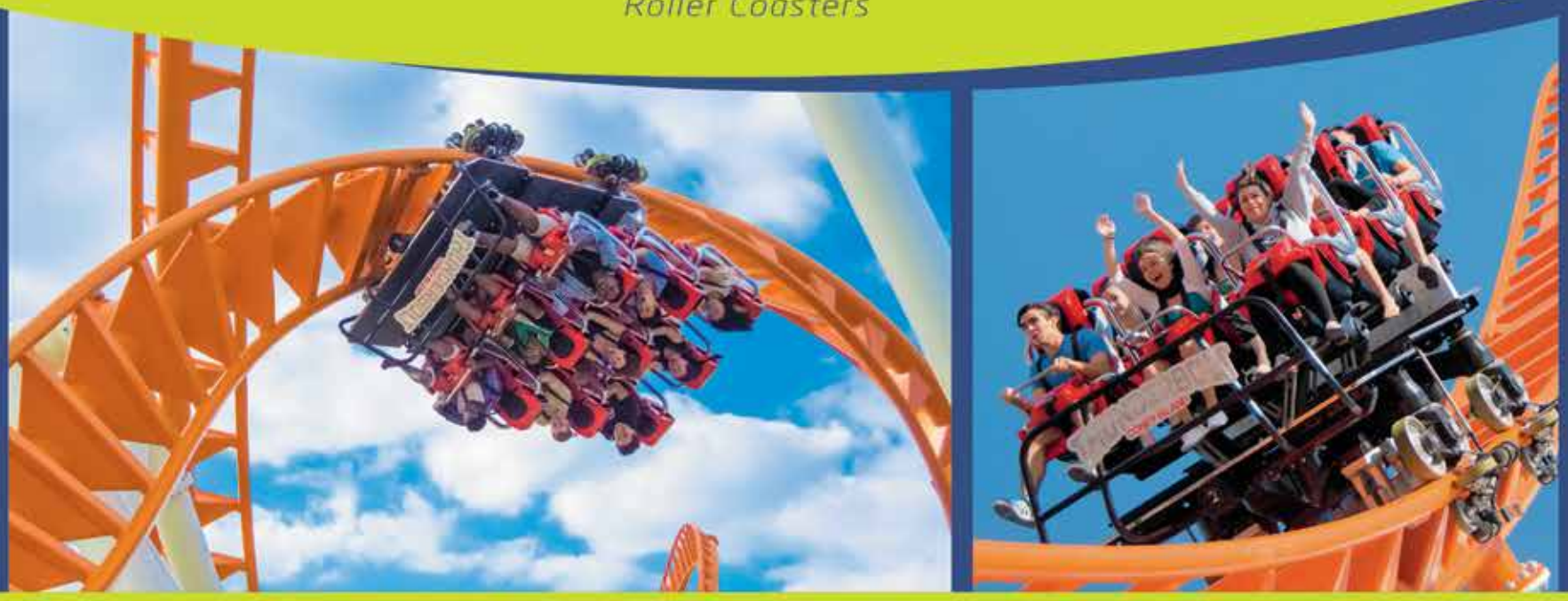

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